Batimore Hebrew Congregation

MIHP# B- 1383

7401 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21208-5490

Constructed between 1948-1953

Private Access

The suburban complex of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation (BHC) is a significant postwar modernist suburban synagogue that is also the work of a master architect, Percival Goodman. The complex dominates the landscape with its large massing, especially as viewed from Park Heights Avenue. The austere facades boldly exhibit the postwar spirit of Judaism, exemplified by the inclusion of the Star of David that is carved into the fenestration of the Charlesworth Road façade. As a complex constructed in the years immediately following World War II and the Holocaust, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation projects a determined statement of the right to worship freely and live as Jews. Architecturally, Goodman provided the congregation with a bold new Modernist expression of an entire suburban Jewish way of life. Although the design departed from precedent, since there was no one Jewish tradition of architecture to follow anyway, it celebrated Jewish traditions related to service, sacred objects, iconography, and congregational functions.[1] In addition, the synagogue's prominent siting along a major suburban thoroughfare and its multifunctional program signified the broader trend in Baltimore and the United States toward building synagogues that wove the varied strands of everyday suburban existence into a Jewish tapestry of life.

[1] Percival Goodman and Paul Goodman. "Tradition From Function." Reprinted from Commentary (June 1947): 542-44. In *Percival Goodman: Architect, Planner, Teacher, Painter* ed. Kimberly J. Elman and Angela Giral. (New York: Columbia University, 2001), 62.

The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation complex went through two building campaigns. The first occurred from 1948 to 1953 and consisted of the sanctuary, social hall and education building. In the first few years of the 1960s the synagogue was expanded with an auditorium, assembly room, office space, and an addition to the education facility.

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation has significance under Criterion C as the work of a master, Percival Goodman, who designed the sanctuary, social hall, and part of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation's education building. Although Goodman was widely known for his synagogue designs, this is his only religious work in the State of Maryland. In addition, the suburban complex has significance under Criterion A as an important component of Maryland and Jewish social history – the establishment of a large and thriving Jewish community in Baltimore and its sequential movement to the suburbs in the twentieth century. As these congregations relocated to the suburban communities, they essentially developed a new building type that allowed for the combination of worship, social/community, and educational space, which served every religious and community need of Jewish suburban households. The new synagogues were not just houses of worship, but complex centers that were used on a daily basis for a wide range of suburban activities. The close proximity of these complexes helped shape Judaism into a way of life, not just a weekly worship ritual. Baltimore Hebrew Congregation was one of the first Baltimore synagogues to relocate from an urban location to a suburban setting in the post-WWII period. During this transition to the suburbs, a number of new synagogue complexes were constructed. This pushed Baltimore to the forefront in the renewed interest in synagogue architecture and the selection of modernism for the new complexes that occurred throughout the United States in the late 1940s and 1950s. Baltimore Hebrew Concregation's architectural distinction and social significance as the embodiment of a new

suburban way of life for one of the nation's oldest and largest Jewish populations makes this resource worthy of designation even though it is less than 50 years old for part of its period of significance.

B-1383

The following National Register of Historic Places form was prepared for inventory documentation purposes only; the property has not been nominated to the National Register.

NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)

OMB No. 10024-0018
MIHP # B-1383

B-1383

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Baltimore Hebrew Congregation

other names

2. Location

street & number 7401 Park Heights Avenue ☐ not for publication

city or town Baltimore ☐ vicinity

state Maryland code MD county Baltimore City code 510 zip code 21208-5490

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☐ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:
- ☐ entered in the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ determined eligible for the National Register.
  - ☐ See continuation sheet.
- ☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register.
- ☐ removed from the National Register.
- ☐ other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
- ☐ public-local
- ☐ public-State
- ☐ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
- ☐ district
- ☐ site
- ☐ structure
- ☐ object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)
N/A

number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register
N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/School
Religion/Religious Facility
Social/Meeting Hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Education/School
Religion/ Religious Facility
Social/Meeting Hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Modern Movement

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
walls Concrete, brick, stone/limestone
roof Other: tar and gravel
other

Narrative Description
(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Description Summary:

The suburban complex of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation (BHC) is a significant postwar modernist suburban synagogue that is also the work of a master architect, Percival Goodman. The complex dominates the landscape with its large massing, especially as viewed from Park Heights Avenue. The austere facades boldly exhibit the postwar spirit of Judaism, exemplified by the inclusion of the Star of David that is carved into the fenestration of the Charlesworth Road façade. As a complex constructed in the years immediately following World War II and the Holocaust, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation projects a determined statement of the right to worship freely and live as Jews. Architecturally, Goodman provided the congregation with a bold new Modernist expression of an entire suburban Jewish way of life. Although the design departed from precedent, since there was no one Jewish tradition of architecture to follow anyway, it celebrated Jewish traditions related to service, sacred objects, iconography, and congregational functions.[1] In addition, the synagogue's prominent siting along a major suburban thoroughfare and its multifunctional program signified the broader trend in Baltimore and the United States toward building synagogues that wove the varied strands of everyday suburban existence into a Jewish tapestry of life.

The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation complex went through two building campaigns. The first occurred from 1948 to 1953 and consisted of the sanctuary, social hall and education building. In the first few years of the 1960s the synagogue was expanded with an auditorium, assembly room, office space, and an addition to the education facility.

[1] Percival Goodman and Paul Goodman. "Tradition From Function." Reprinted from Commentary (June 1947): 542-44. In *Percival Goodman: Architect, Planner, Teacher, Painter* ed. Kimberly J. Elman and Angela Giral. (New York: Columbia University, 2001), 62.

General Description:

Site Plan

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation is located within the City of Baltimore, in the northwest corner of the city, just south of Baltimore County. The site is bordered on the southwest by Park Heights Avenue, a major thoroughfare. In addition, Charlesworth Road borders the property on the southeast and Slade Avenue, is located to the northwest. On the opposite side of Charlesworth Road there are older apartment buildings, while Slade Avenue borders a single-family residential development. To the rear of the property (the northeast side) there are primarily single-family residential dwellings that were built at approximately the same period as Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. The complex, located on a 5.25-acre lot, is set back from the street on all sides (100 feet from Park Heights Avenue), giving it a "residential character in a rolling landscape."[2] The landscaping on the property includes large swaths of grassy lawn and scattered trees and shrubs. The surrounding neighborhood includes apartments, single-family residences, and a few small businesses.

In the original design and subsequent additions, the massing and materials of BHC unify the functions of the synagogue: worship, social, administrative, and educational. From Park Heights Avenue, the monumental portico entrance and mass of the prayer hall behind dominate the landscape, while the other functions are arranged in subordinate relation beyond the rear of the temple. Due to the number of people driving to the new synagogue complex, a larger parking lot was constructed in back of the building, but is not visible from Park Heights Avenue, maintaining the visual dominance of the prayer hall and landscaping.[3] The complex is approximately 200' on the Park Heights side and 400' on the Charlesworth Road and Slade Avenue sides. The entire building is a long complex placed perpendicular to Park Heights Avenue.

The floor plan consists of a central spine that extends back from Park Heights Avenue, and connects each component of the complex. The program includes a sanctuary, social hall, auditorium, school, chapel, library, and offices. Beginning in the front of the complex, facing Park Heights Avenue, one finds the prayer hall, or worship space, of the congregation. Towards Charlesworth Road, and proceeding to the rear of the property from the sanctuary, is the Strauss Social Hall, kitchen, Rothschild Center, and Dalsheimer Auditorium. The library and offices are in the northwest section of the property, near Slade Avenue. Adjacent to the office area is the education building. The chapel is located at the end of the central hallway, towards the rear parking lot. This parking lot was added after the 1953 construction and is not visible from Park Heights Avenue.

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[2] Matthew Fitzsimmons, *The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation*, ARCH 634 term paper, Professor Isabelle Gournay instructor, College Park, Md: 2002.
[3] Matthew Fitzsimmons, *The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation*, College Park, Md: 2002, 17.

While the arrangement of the property was slightly altered during the 1960s addition, the basic principles of the massing – the dominant sanctuary with subordinate social and educational spaces--was maintained. The parking lot and new entrance created with these later developments primarily influenced the rear portions of the property and left the primary façade facing Park Heights Avenue intact. Although the site plan has changed since Goodman's original design, his concepts remain visible and were respected in the new plan, thus maintaining the integrity of the site. In addition, as a suburban synagogue complex on a large plot of land, there was intention from the onset that the complex would grow and change to sustain the congregation's needs. The 1960s additions to the synagogue were respective of Goodman's intention, while fulfilling growing demands of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.

Exterior Elevations

The exterior description of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation begins on the Park Heights façade, the primary elevation of the complex. From there, it will proceed counterclockwise around the structure, subsequently describing the Charlesworth Road façade, the rear elevation, and the Slade Avenue façade.[4]

Park Heights Façade

Although most visitors enter the synagogue from the rear (from the parking areas), the Park Heights elevation was designed as the monumental facade of the complex. It dominates the landscape and represents the view that most people have when driving past the site. This façade has remained unchanged with the 1960s additions to the complex.

The main façade is set back approximately 100 feet from Park Heights Avenue and has a concrete and stone walk leading from the public sidewalk to the building. The monumental façade is stripped down to basic masses and materials, including Maryland brick and limestone trim. The façade is dominated by a massive, approximately three-story tall central block with shorter, one-story blocks flanking it on both the north and south sides. The overall massing of the complex of the large central cube that makes up the sanctuary, with smaller wings to the north, south, and extending quite a way back to the rear. The central block has a recessed triple-bay portico that is approximately five feet shorter than the full height of the façade. While it is reminiscent of Classical motifs, it is a confident modernist expression of the portico concept. Each of the three blocks is topped with a flat roof. The two smaller blocks are less than half the height of the center section and

[4] A current floor plan of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation is included at the end of this nomination and may provide additional orientation for the reader.

are set further back from the road. These side wings contain additional seating for the sanctuary that is used during the High Holidays. The wings are composed entirely of brick and each has three windows. The windows, all located near the base of the building, have two horizontal panes. In front of the wings, and in line with the central portion of the building, are raised limestone plinths that extend the lines of the limestone watertable on the main façade. These plinths are primarily aesthetic in their purpose.

The central portion of the façade consists of a rectilinear triple bay portico trimmed with local limestone and set into an austere rectilinear brick façade. Each bay of the portico contains a set of double wooden doors, approximately eight feet tall, each of which has three rows of four square glass insets. Adjacent to the doors on the south is the cornerstone from the congregation's 1870 temple. The three bays are separated by monumental limestone piers. The two end bays contain three contemporary façade sculptures and the central bay has two. The façade sculptures represent the fundamental principles upon which Judaism rests. The central panels depict the Tablets of Law and Creation. To the left, the three sculptures represent the Prophet Nathan and King David, Revelation at Sinai, and Exodus. The right panels illustrate Ruth and Naomi, Swords into Ploughshares, and the Sacrifice of Isaac.

Charlesworth Road Façade

The Charlesworth Road elevation contains the south facades of the sanctuary, social hall, and auditorium, all of which are primarily composed of brick. Although this façade is broken in places with doors or fenestration, it is basically unornamented. Charlesworth Road is a very narrow street that resembles an alley. From this elevation, the depth of the complex is visible, as it is about twice as long as the Park Heights elevation. The Dalsheimer Auditorium, located on the eastern end of this façade, was added in the 1960s addition.

On the west end of this façade, to the front of the lower wing of the sanctuary is a fenced playground. The Charlesworth Road façade of the one-story sanctuary wings contain two rows (with three windows each) of small, horizontal windows. In addition, there are four large horizontal windows in the center, each divided into five vertical lights by silver-toned mullions. The effect is to provide a glass wall interrupted by narrow brick piers. Behind this section is the taller, central portion of the complex that is visible from the Park Heights elevation. In the center of this section is a glass clerestory, divided by horizontal and vertical mullions that form an oblique Star of David, which is also made of limestone trim. The effect of the clerestory is monumental.

To the east of the sanctuary is a concrete walkway leading to the building and, once inside, to the main hallway of the complex. The entryway consists of a brick portico supported by concrete columns. Two sets of glass

doors are surrounded by gold-toned metal. Adjacent to the doors, but set back, are two large glass windows that are also divided by silver mullions. The next section of this elevation is the Straus Social Hall, which runs perpendicular to the south of the main hallway and protrudes farther out toward the road than the sanctuary portion. The central area of the social hall rises two storeys and contains a large window divided into five narrow vertical sections by silver metal mullions. At the top of this portion of the façade is a limestone cornice. On either side of the central portion, the façade steps back. These recessed sections are blind walls; they do not have any windows or cornice and are composed entirely of brick.

To the east of the social hall the façade recesses much further to the area containing the kitchen and the Rothschild Center. This area is composed mainly of brick interrupted by a regular rhythm of vertical windows capped by a limestone cornice. Adjacent to the recessed section to the east is the exterior wall of the auditorium, which is a roughly three-storey-high brick wall divided by thin limestone attached piers. The piers extend past the top of the auditorium wall and are connected to one another with a thin horizontal, undecorated limestone cornice.

A one-story covered walkway leads from the side entrance to the otherwise detached L-shaped preschool building situated to the southeast of the main complex. This walkway is made of brick and has a concrete cornice. The preschool building is one-story with its exterior wall mainly comprised of brick. The bottom portion of the brick wall extends slightly out creating a water table. At the top of the brick wall is an undecorated limestone cornice. The preschool building has several widely spaced vertical windows rising from water table to nearly the height of the cornice; they are set into the building. The windows are surrounded by a row of protruding bricks that do not follow the running bond pattern. This creates the appearance of brick pillars (one brick length wide) on the sides of the windows. The entryway into the preschool building is marked by brick columns and two sets of parallel glass doors. The preschool building is mainly visible from the rear façade, with only the end wall visible from Charlesworth Road. The preschool is much smaller in scale than the large massing of the sanctuary and social hall portions of the synagogue.

Rear Elevation

Along this elevation (moving counterclockwise, from south to north) is the rear façade of the auditorium, the covered walkway connecting the worship and social space to the educational spaces, the upper portion of the Hoffberger Chapel, set back from the covered walkway, administrative spaces, and the educational wing. The façade decreases in its monumentality as you move from south to north. The auditorium (approximately three storeys in height) towers over the shorter two-storey education wing of the building (located to the northern end of the façade).

At the southernmost end of the façade is the rear wall of the auditorium. It has thin limestone columns that resemble those on the Charlesworth Road façade. The main difference in the auditorium wall on the rear façade is that the limestone columns do not extend to the ground. Below the columns is a limestone plinth, which sits above a series of vertical glass windows. A set of glass doors lead into the ground floor of the auditorium on the rear façade. Even with the limestone piers and panel, this façade of the auditorium is very simple in its fenestration and is only remarkable in its massing.

Connected to the auditorium, to the north, is the most utilized entryway into the synagogue complex. This entrance is separated from the main parking lot with landscaping and a small driveway. It is covered by a flat-roofed concrete canopy that is supported by brick pillars and shelters an aggregate stone floor. This entrance has become the most widely used due to its proximity to the main parking lot of the synagogue.

In the center of this façade, set back from and visible above the entrance, is a circular shaped chapel, which also has a flat roof. The chapel is constructed of concrete with embedded stained glass windows. There is a landscaped garden to one side of the entryway. The covered walkway extends south from this entrance to the preschool building and north to the educational wing. The entrance to the educational wing is also comprised of a concrete portico, brick columns, and glass doors.

This façade was the most altered by the 1960s additions to the complex. The chapel, auditorium, walkway to the preschool building and the eastern end of the education wing of the main complex were all added after the initial construction. This basically completely altered the rear elevation from the one that Goodman designed. Although these portions of the building were added, however, they maintain the overall character of the complex and preserve the integrity of the primary Park Heights Avenue façade.

Slade Avenue Elevation

The Slade Avenue façade is comprised of the exterior wall of the three-storey educational wing. It is divided into three sections, the first located adjacent to the school entrance. The eastern two-thirds of this building was added during the 1960s construction. This section is three-storeys and is composed of brick, with six sets of horizontal glass windows on each floor. Each window is divided into four vertical sections. The outer sections of these windows are further divided horizontally by metal strips. The second section of this façade is two-stories and includes four sets of windows on each level. The windows are divided into four panes with the outer sections additionally divided horizontally. The third section is also two-stories and has two windows on the lower floor and four windows on the upper floor. Between each of the sections there is an entrance to the complex, which is set back into the building.

The north side of the sanctuary is also visible from Slade Avenue. This façade of the sanctuary is similar to the south side, which faces Charlesworth Road. The taller section has a large window, which is divided by limestone to form the Star of David. The shorter portions consist of four sets of windows that are divided into five sections by metal mullions.

Interior

From the Park Heights elevation, the sanctuary can be entered through the central doors. This was the original entrance into the building. After the parking lot was added towards the rear of the property in the 1960s, that entrance became the daily, common entrance. After entering the building from the Park Heights doors, there is a foyer in front of the sanctuary entrance. The floor of the foyer is covered with maroon carpeting. At both ends (north and south) of the foyer are stone stairs that lead to the balcony seating. Surrounding the doors into the sanctuary is an oil on canvas mural painting (37.5"x10') that represents the theme of Moses and the Burning Bush.

From the foyer, the user enters the rear of the sanctuary, which seats 785. The sanctuary is 160 feet long (front to back) and 125 feet wide (side to side). It has a central, carpeted aisle. The seating is arranged in rows of pews that are designed to function as individual seats. Each has a purple upholstered seat and armrests. Each row of pews has a continuous wooden back. Between the rows of pews, the floor is covered with plastic tile. The space between the back pew and the rear wall and between the front row and the bema is covered with purple carpet. Curtain partitions separate the primary sanctuary from the wings, which can accommodate an additional 672 members (336 on either side). The individual seats in the wings are wooden and covered with purple fabric. The cantilevered balcony, with a capacity for 362 people, is in the back of the sanctuary. Along the rear wall are two open wooden cases that hold the congregation's books of memorial. The ceiling is made of wood and has concealed lights in the panels.

The front of the sanctuary has a low platform that is reached by two steps. On this platform, four additional steps lead to the congregation's bema. In the center of this platform are three additional stairs, which lead to the bema. Both the platform and the bema are covered with purple carpet. On the bema there is one podium (although there were originally two). Behind the bema is the Ark, which is constructed of wood and framed by gold metal. The Ark consists of four doors covered with a contemporary needlepoint tapestry. The center doors slide open and house the congregation's sacred texts. The four 3.5' by 5' panels of the tapestry, designed by local artists and congregant Amalie Rothschild, represent the wandering of the Jewish people in the wilderness. Above the Ark is the eternal light, which hangs from the ceiling and is fueled by oil. To the left of the Ark is a metal menorah and above is a representation of the Ten Commandments. The menorah is a 175-pound candelabra made of welded bronze and steel. The wall behind the bema is decorated floor to ceiling with a

decorative wooden openwork patterning. This repetitive design consists of rows of two wood panels running the length of the bema wall, separated by approximately four inches. Slimmer vertical pieces of wood perpendicular to the horizontal members run from the top of the bema wall to the floor. This pattern creates a rhythm of open boxes, which contain two diagonally angled pieces of wood that come together to form the shape of a V. Behind this wall is an off-white cloth that separates the choir from the congregation. The choir space is reached by a staircase located to the rear of the bema wall.

From the sanctuary, a hall leads to the east, through the foyer to the social hall, which is 110 feet by 35 feet. The social hall seats 472 for lectures or 304 for dinner. The room has a wood floor, wooden wall paneling up to the height of approximately three feet, like a wainscoting, and a high ceiling separated into coves, each holding hanging chandeliers. On the two long side walls there are pairs of large vertical mirrors that rest above the wainscoting. The south wall of the room contains a monumental window facing out to a paved garden. The social hall is designed as a flexible space that can be divided into two smaller rooms. East of the social hall is the Dalsheimer Auditorium. It contains a small stage at the top of six steps. The auditorium is outfitted with theatre seats, divided into three sections. It is painted in warm colors but otherwise unornamented.

A second hallway, perpendicular to the main one, leads from the social hall to the education wing of the complex. The school portion of the synagogue includes three levels of classrooms and offices and has over fifty rooms. The school serves 260 students and includes classrooms, offices, bathrooms, and storage space. The majority of this building is made of concrete block walls and tile floors. Many of the walls are painted with colorful murals that represent the Jewish faith.

During the 1960s the complex underwent an expansion to accommodate the growing number of congregation members. A youth center, auditorium, chapel, assembly room, and additional classrooms and offices were constructed. These additions were arranged along the hallway connecting the new chapel to the sanctuary, thus altering the Charlesworth Road, rear, and Slade Avenue facades, but preserving the original Park Heights elevation. The chapel contains sixteen contemporary stained glass windows with representations of Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Elijah, Samuel, King David, Isaiah, Amos, and Ruth. The windows are all sixteen feet tall and two feet wide. Also during this construction, the large parking lot to the rear of the property was constructed.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a

Area of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Art

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☒ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☒ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance
(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Art
Education
Religion
Social History

Period of Significance
1948-1953, 1948-1970

Significant Dates
1948-1953, 1967-1970

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder
Percival Goodman, Bonnett & Brandt

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #_____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☒ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: University of Maryland, School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

Summary Statement of Significance:

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation has significance under Criterion C as the work of a master, Percival Goodman, who designed the sanctuary, social hall, and part of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation's education building. Although Goodman was widely known for his synagogue designs, this is his only religious work in the State of Maryland. In addition, the suburban complex has significance under Criterion A as an important component of Maryland and Jewish social history – the establishment of a large and thriving Jewish community in Baltimore and its sequential movement to the suburbs in the twentieth century. As these congregations relocated to the suburban communities, they essentially developed a new building type that allowed for the combination of worship, social/community, and educational space, which served every religious and community need of Jewish suburban households. The new synagogues were not just houses of worship, but complex centers that were used on a daily basis for a wide range of suburban activities. The close proximity of these complexes helped shape Judaism into a way of life, not just a weekly worship ritual. Baltimore Hebrew Congregation was one of the first Baltimore synagogues to relocate from an urban location to a suburban setting in the post-WWII period. During this transition to the suburbs, a number of new synagogue complexes were constructed. This pushed Baltimore to the forefront in the renewed interest in synagogue architecture and the selection of modernism for the new complexes that occurred throughout the United States in the late 1940s and 1950s. Baltimore Hebrew Congregation's architectural distinction and social significance as the embodiment of a new suburban way of life for one of the nation's oldest and largest Jewish populations makes this resource worthy of designation even though it is less than 50 years old for part of its period of significance.

Resource History and Historic Context:

Social History of the Jewish Population in Baltimore

The history of the Jewish population in Baltimore, originally comprised first of German Jews and later Eastern European Jews, is essential to an understanding of the trends in suburbanization that resulted in the construction of Chizuk Amuno's suburban synagogue complex. There had been a long tradition of immigration, relocation, and suburbanization within the Jewish community of Baltimore. Throughout different periods of history, the Jewish community relocated, generally to the north and west of the central city, as the result of chain migration patterns, discrimination, institutional support, and the construction of new synagogues. Although during the early years of Eastern European immigration the existing German Jews and the new immigrants generally maintained separate communities both geographically and socially – including separate synagogues -- in the mid-twentieth century they began to merge into a unified Jewish community of Baltimore.

Baltimore Jews played a major role in the development of North American Judaism. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Baltimore was a center for Jewish life in America. Although Maryland's first settlers had purely Christian ideals in mind, they became more hospitable towards Jewish populations over time. In 1632 the proprietary charter for the State of Maryland invoked "zel [sic] for the propagation of the Christian faith." The Act Concerning Religion was passed a few years later, in 1649, as a result of growing tensions between Catholics and Protestants within the state. The Act declared tolerance for Christians, but stated that those persons who did not follow the Christian faith "shall be punished with death and confiscation or forfeiture of all his or her lands and goods."[5]

The first recorded Jewish resident of Maryland was Jacob Lumbrozo, a healer, innkeeper, businessman, and Indian trader. He was sentenced to death in 1658 for blasphemy under the Act Concerning Religion (known as the Tolerance Act), but was later freed under a general amnesty in honor of Richard Cromwell's accession as Lord Protector of England. The next known Jewish settlers were Benjamin Levy, a merchant who moved to Baltimore from Philadelphia, and Solomon Etting, who established the city's water company and later became the director of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.[6]

When Maryland's constitution was adopted in 1776, Jews were forbidden to hold elected office or practice law. Twenty-one years later, Etting and other Jewish residents who were gaining prominence in Baltimore's business community petitioned the Maryland General Assembly to repeal these provisions from the constitution as the

[5] Howell S. Baum, *The Organization of Hope: Communities Planning Themselves* (Albany, NY: 1997), 17; Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament*, 1634-1980 (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988), 20-21.
[6] Baum, 18-19.

Jewish population continued to grow. This law, commonly known as the "Jew Bill", was not passed until 1826. It permitted Jews to hold public office and practice law and allowed Baltimore to become a predominant immigration center for the Jewish community.

The first wave of 19th century Jewish immigration to Baltimore coincided with a massive exile of European Jews who were in search of economic opportunity and political and religious freedom. The earliest immigrants generally hailed from Germany, Bavaria, Bohemia, Austria-Hungary, the Rhineland, and German-speaking Switzerland. These immigrants tended to settle alongside other European immigrants near the entry port in east and southeast Baltimore, around Lombard, High, Exeter, Aisquith, and Central Streets.[7] As early as the 1830s, there were enough Jewish immigrants that viable neighborhoods and community organizations formed.[8]

The first organized congregation in the city was the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, which, as the only synagogue in the city, was known as the Stadt Shul, or the city synagogue. The second synagogue was the Fells Point Hebrew Fellowship (known as the Eden Street Shul) and the third was the Har Sinai Verein, which followed the rituals of Hamburg's Reform temple as opposed to Orthodoxy.[9] In 1853, Temple Oheb Shalom was formed as the fourth congregation in Baltimore, by members of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation who were unhappy with the traditional attitude of their rabbi and the reforms offered by the Har Sinai congregation. Eighteen years later, traditional German Jews who were displeased with the continual reforms occurring at the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation formed the Chizuk Amuno congregation.[10] The Jewish population in Baltimore had grown from 200 families in 1840 to 10,000 individuals in 1880. Many entered the clothing business and prospered as Baltimore grew to have one of the largest clothing trade businesses in America with its Jewish community comprising nearly this entire industry.[11]

The earliest trends of moving out of the central city were the result of class distinctions within the German-Jewish community. A small group of elite Jews began to move out of southeast Baltimore to the northwest. After the Civil War, this trend accelerated, as an enclave of prosperous Jews emerged in the northwest portion of the city. This marked the beginning of a century-long trend of Jewish families moving further away from the city center.[12] From the early years of the mass German immigration, leaders within the Jewish community established charitable organizations to care for their less fortunate. These included the United Hebrew Benevolent Society, the Hebrew Assistance Society, the Hebrew Hospital and Asylum, the Jewish Education Alliance, the Hebrew Free Burial Society, and the Jewish Home for Consumptives.[13]

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[7] Jan Bernhardt Schein, *On Three Pillars: The History of Chizuk Amuno Congregation 1871*-1996 (Baltimore: 2000), 5.
[8] Gilbert Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore: A Family Album* (Baltimore: 2000), 5.
[9] Schein, *On Three Pillars*, 5-6.
[10] Schein, *On Three Pillars, 9*.
[11] Baum, *The Organization of Hope*, 19.
[12] Ibid, 19.
[13] Ibid, 20.

By the late 1860s, the rate of German immigration had drastically slowed, and Jews began arriving (in small numbers at first) from the Russian Empire of Eastern Europe. The Port of Baltimore was the first stop for thousands of Eastern European immigrants, along with Boston, Philadelphia, and New York.[14] This second wave of Jewish immigration into Baltimore flourished in the post-Civil War period. Eastern European Jews were fleeing from persecution, epidemic, and famine. The established German-Jewish population commonly referred to the new immigrants as "Russians", acknowledging the czar's control over Poland, Lithuania, and the Ukraine, among other countries. During the 1880s 24,095 Jews landed in Baltimore, with an additional 20,000 arriving in the 1890s, and 25,000 from 1900-1905.[15] In addition to the immigrants arriving directly in Baltimore, Jews made their way to Baltimore from other eastern ports as the city acted as a "magnet" for Jews.

The newly landed Eastern European Jews encountered an organized, sophisticated German-Jewish community that was generally located around East Lombard and East Baltimore Streets between Central Avenue and the Fallsway.[16] A social divide emerged between the two immigrant groups, reflected in the separation of their synagogues. The existing German-Jewish residents were concerned that the influx of poor "Russian" Jews would damage their social standing.[17]

The Eastern European synagogues -- the Bikur Cholim Congregation (1856), the B'nai Israel Congregation (1873), and the Anshe Chesed Bialystok Congregation (1875) -- were located near the immigrant communities in southeast Baltimore. The rapid surge in immigration resulted in "ghetto-type" conditions within the east Baltimore neighborhoods. As these poor immigrants continued to settle in Baltimore, established German-Jews began to move to the northwest near Eutaw Place and into the established residences, mansions, and grand apartment buildings that lined the boulevard.[18] This caused a geographic rift within the Jewish community of Baltimore. The German-Jews generally lived in the northwest portion of the city and were commonly referred to as "Uptown Jews", while the Eastern European Jews remained in southeast Baltimore and were known as the "Downtown Russians."[19] The Eastern European immigrants arrived with experience in industrial fields, especially tailoring. They often found work in the shops and factories owned by the German-Jewish population. The new immigrants formed organized unions and began to strike out against the German-Jewish factory owners. This caused a deeper rift between the two groups and began to discourage German charitable concern for the less fortunate population.[20]

By 1895, there were four German-Jewish synagogues established in the northwest portion of the city. Within a few blocks of each other were the Chizuk Amuno Congregation, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, Temple Oheb Shalom, and Har Sinai. The majority of the members of these congregations lived on six main streets –

[14] Schein, *On Three Pillars, 68.*
[15] Baum, *The Organization of Hope*, 20.
[16] Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore*, 4.
[17] Baum, *The Organization of Hope*, 20.
[18] Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore*, 5.
[19] Baum, *The Organization of Hope*, 21.
[20] Ibid, 20-21.

Eutaw Place, Madison Avenue, Linden Avenue, McCulloh Street, Bolton Street, and Druid Hill Avenue. In the history of Chizuk Amuno Congregation Jan Bernhardt Schein notes that "despite differing religious preferences, the German Jews of Baltimore lived side-by-side, served communal organizations together, often intermarried with one another, and some German Jews maintained dual membership – paying dues to more than one synagogue."[21]

By the 1920s, the Eastern European Jewish community had gained both social and economic stability. They subsequently began to follow their German predecessors to the northwest portion of the city and the Park Heights-Reistertown Road area. As a result, the German Jews, still not comfortable living next to the Eastern European communities, began to move further out toward the City boundary and the suburbs.[22] The opening of the Eastern European Shaarei Zion Congregation on Park Heights Avenue, just north of Druid Hill Park, represented the onset of the relocation of the newer immigrants to this portion of the city. Another indicator of these population shifts was the opening of a branch of the German-Jewish, orthodox Shearith Israel Congregation further out on Park Heights Avenue, near Glen Avenue.[23] As the two communities began to move in similar directions, a growing sense of unity began to emerge between the two immigrant populations. There were two main reasons for the Jewish population shift to the north and west. First, the Protestant and Catholic communities of northeast Baltimore, centered in Roland Park, were generally inhospitable to the Jewish population. Second, the Eastern European Jews followed the pattern of movement that the German Jews had earlier embarked on.[24]

During the 1920s there was a construction spree among Jewish congregations throughout the United States. Lay leaders believed that new buildings and renowned cantors would help increase membership and attendance, which dropped off in the 1920s as "increased mobility and the need for financial stability" caused many men to prioritize social and economic pursuits over religious observances. To complicate matters, Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe nearly stopped in 1924 when the United States Congress passed the Johnson Immigration Act, which severely restricted the immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe.[25] Nonetheless, Baltimore's synagogues took advantage of the construction boom of the 1920s in two ways. New assembly spaces attracted Jews who "no longer assembled for community events at privately owned locations…but rather convened for public rallies and memorials at synagogues."[26] Secondly, in striving—perhaps for the first time—to adapt to the changing *American* lifestyles of their congregations, some synagogues began to reinvent themselves as community centers. As the intensive Jewish homelife of the immigrant generation waned, adults began to

[21] Schein, *On Three Pillars*, 103.
[22] Baum, *The Organization of Hope*, 21.
[23] Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore*, 8.
[24] Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore*, 8.
[25] Schein, *On Three Pillars, 165.*
[26] Ibid, 166.

attend late Friday evening services not just for worship but for "social interaction and communal fellowship."[27] This trend would expand significantly with the synagogue relocations to the suburbs after World War II.

By the 1930s Park Heights Avenue up to the city boundary was an elongated Jewish neighborhood. The extension of the streetcar lines made it possible for the area around Park Heights Avenue and Reisterstown Road to become bedroom communities for Jewish people working in downtown Baltimore. The Jewish population had been drawn to this area because of the affordable rowhouses, the friendly neighborhoods, and the abundance of drug stores and kosher butcher shops. In addition, while some residents moved prior to the relocation of the synagogues, many chose to live in the area after their synagogues had constructed new facilities nearby.[28] In 1938, a new orthodox congregation, Beth Jacob, formed on Park Heights and Manhattan Avenues and the reform Har Sinai built a suburban branch on Park Heights and Strathmore Avenues. In addition, they relocated their religious school uptown.[29] Throughout the following decades, Jewish life would be wholly transported to this area as the Jewish Community Center, Hebrew Schools, Baltimore Hebrew University, and agencies of the Associated Jewish Charities all relocated to the Park Heights neighborhood.[30]

An ongoing conflict within the Jewish community of Baltimore was whether to identify itself as a religious or an ethnic group. In medieval Europe Jewish communities were geographically defined and self-contained. The Enlightenment brought about the development of nation-states and Jewish communities subsequently began to define themselves based on the customs of their homelands. Throughout Germany, the forces of the Enlightenment caused an erosion of the established Jewish community and posited Jews as individual citizens. As a result, German-Jews began to think of themselves as a purely religious group similar to Catholics or Protestants. In Eastern Europe, though, there was a mix of national groups and the formation of nation-states occurred at a slower pace than in Germany. The Russian government also treated the Jewish population as a separate national, or ethnic, group. Throughout the twentieth century, distinct Jewish communities, commonly living in ghettos, existed across Eastern Europe. While their religious practices followed several centuries of tradition, religion was not the primary element in their Jewish identity.[31] In North America, German-Jews tended to adopt widespread American customs. This was especially visible in the reform congregations with liberal practices and patterns of worship. The Eastern European immigrants preferred to use more traditional religious practices and formed Orthodox congregations that were both religiously and socially similar to the institutions of small Eastern European Jewish settlements. As these newer immigrants began to adapt to American society, they sought out a more moderate form of worship. Conservative Judaism was created as a compromise between the strict Orthodox and the liberal Reform movements. While the practice of conservatism emerged in Philadelphia and New York around the turn of the century, Baltimore's conservative

[27] Schein, *On Three Pillars*, 166, 150-51.
[28] Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore*, 8 and 128.
[29] Schein, *On Three Pillars, 192.*
[30] Sandler, *Jewish Baltimore*, 206.
[31] Baum, *The Organization of Hope*, 22.

congregations grew mainly during the post-World War II period of suburbanization.[32] Today, conservative congregations generally belong to the United Synagogue of America, the liberal or reform congregations to the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and orthodox to the Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations.[33] The separation of the Jewish community by type of worship (conservative, reform, or orthodox) was reflected in their geographic distribution. The orthodox communities tended to remain in the Park Heights area, while the reform and conservative Jews lived in the adjacent northwest suburbs.[34] Although the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation and Temple Oheb Shalom are located within the City of Baltimore, they are generally thought of as located in the northwest suburbs along with other Conservative and Reform congregations, such as Chizuk Amuno, and Beth El.

By 1947 there were 80,0000 Jews living in the greater Baltimore area (as estimated by the Baltimore Jewish Council.[35]) In this post-war period, a sense of nationalism emerged in America. This had a positive effect on the relationship between the German and Eastern European Jewish communities. Throughout the following decades the groups would work together on a variety of issues including buffering the criticism of the Christian community in the 1950s and eliminating the use of restrictive covenants to limit the rights of Jews in property ownership (declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1953).[36]

Suburbanization of American Judaism

In Baltimore, the shift to suburban Judaism was particularly dramatic and epitomized a national phenomenon of relocating to the vast open spaces of the suburbs and constructing large synagogue complexes. After World War II, most new residential development occurred in bands and corridors around established urban centers. Deconcentration challenged organized Judaism in that it dispersed congregation members over a wider area, distributing households in far more integrated neighborhoods that provided little natural support for Jewish identification or traditional lifeways.[37] Synagogues filled this void through the provision of all-encompassing social, educational, and worship centers. As a result, many synagogues experienced an increase in membership and were forced to assess their facilities. How could all the new worshippers be accommodated, especially on High Holidays? Should existing structures be modified or should new synagogues be constructed? What aesthetic environment would best reflect the new religious reality of American Jewish life?[38] In order to answer these questions successfully, congregations developed what was essentially a new building type – the Modern synagogue complex.

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[32] Ibid, 22-23.
[33] Paul Thiry, Richard M. Bennett and Henry L. Kamphoefner, *Churches and Temples*, New York: 1953, 19J.
[34] Baum, *The Organization of Hope*, 23.
[35] Schein, *On Three Pillars*, 228.
[36] Phillip Kahn, *Uncommon Threads: Threads That Were the Fabric of Baltimore Jewish Life*, Baltimore: 1996, 221.
[37] Schein, *On Three Pillars*, 228.
[38] Lance J. Sussman, "The Suburbanization of American Judaism as Reflected in Synagogue Buildings and Architecture, 1945-1975," *American Jewish History* 73 (September 1985): 31.

Modernism was chosen as the most appropriate architectural style for these new complexes for a number of reasons. The suburban synagogues represented a completely new building form in a growing suburban landscape. As suburban locales gained political power and independence, the residents often desired to separate themselves from "old" traditions. One method of doing so involved turning to Modernism as the principal architectural style – especially for prominent social and community buildings such as religious structures – including synagogues. Modern architecture at its best offered the ability to merge the multifunctional practical requirements of the building with a design expressive of its symbolic purpose.[39] In many cases, the lay leaders and prominent patrons of the congregations influenced both the functions and designs of the new buildings. They have asked for "social halls, stages for dramatic performances, art galleries, swimming pools, classrooms, libraries, museums, meeting rooms, and kitchens.[40] At Baltimore Hebrew Congregation the Rothschild family, who were also patrons of the avant-garde in art and music, appear to have influenced design decisions; artist Amalie Rothschild, for example, designed the tapestries covering the Ark in the sanctuary. Another rationale for selecting Modernism related to the progressive thinking and liberal attitudes associated with Reform congregations. As national Jewish organizations began to support Modern designs for Reform synagogues, the typology quickly spread throughout the entire Jewish community as a method of giving the synagogue a unique and outwardly recognizable architectural form.

Collectively, Jewish leaders, architects, and artists concluded that a new synagogue form was necessary to symbolize the arrival of Judaism in the suburbs. In addition, a bold and Modern synagogue design reaffirmed publicly the Jewish community's right to assert their collective heritage and identity, particularly in light of the persecutions before and during the European war.[41] European architects immigrating to the United States, such as Walter Gropius, who designed Temple Oheb Shalom, brought a more functionalist approach to architecture with them. By the end of the 1940s, a new synagogue form had emerged. The design was distinctly suburban and unique from synagogues of the pre-war period. The new synagogue complex was a symbol of suburbia, and it actively nurtured the family values associated with it. It incorporated programs that promoted the values of recreation and a youth-oriented society. Some general characteristics of the suburban synagogue included an overall sense of "newness" expressed in the furniture, light fixtures, Torah covers and candelabras; increased accessibility by the automobile; and the availability of an expansive setting with large lawns and attractive landscaping.[42] In addition, the suburban synagogue had to accommodate a sprawling, multifunctional complex and room to park cars, and therefore demanded larger plots of land than were generally available within the city.

From 1945 to 1975, an impressive number of suburban-style Modern synagogues were constructed across the United States. In the post-Holocaust period, there was a determined revival of faith, especially within the Jewish community, which brought unprecedented numbers of worshippers into existing synagogues. This

[39] Avram Kampf, Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965 (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1966), 28.
[40] Ibid., 25.
[41] Brian de Breffny, The Synagogue (New York: Macmillan, 1978), 192.
[42] Sussman, "The Suburbanization of American Judaism as Reflected in Synagogue Buildings and Architecture, 1945-1975," 31-32.

caused overcrowding among congregations, and led many of them to construct new facilities. In this period of widespread construction, "it might even be asserted that building new synagogues constituted the central religious activity of American Jews."[43] This building boom brought the United States to the forefront in modern synagogue architectural design.[44] Baltimore synagogues played a prominent role in that process

Before World War II, American synagogues generally followed the plans and techniques of Christian churches.[45] Architects in Europe, however, began experimenting with new styles, flexible spaces, and new building materials in synagogue design as early as the 1920s and 1930s. Although architectural innovation nearly ceased in Europe as congregations focused on the war and the unfolding Holocaust, it sprang forth with renewed vigor in the United States after the war, as the role of the synagogue in daily life transformed to suit the needs of the new suburban population.[46]

The idea that the synagogue could serve the cultural and social needs, as well as the spiritual needs, of the Jewish community arose out of the conditions of the American urban environment. The "Jewish American" movement, which emerged in second and third tier settlements throughout cities in the early twentieth century, promoted a new type of Jewish community that was based primarily on ethnicity.[47] The ideas of Mordecai Kaplan, who believed that Judaism was more than a religion and encompassed a civilization that included language, culture, and customs, promoted the concept of a "synagogue center" offering religious services, study programs, drama, dance, song, sports, and exercise in an effort to retain young Jews in the congregations and reduce the amount of intermarriage. Mordecai Kaplan was born in Lithuania in 1881, where he received a traditional Jewish education. He came to the United States in 1889.[48]

According to Lance Sussman, in the post-war period of suburbanization, America "changed from the land of immigrants, with its thriving ethnic groups, to the triple melting pot in which people tend[ed] more and more to identify and locate themselves in terms of three great sub-communities – Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish – defined in religious terms."[49] As one of these emerging sub-communities, the Jews found themselves as guardians of one-third of the American religious heritage, though only comprising 3.2% of the total American population. These empowered Jews quickly found their synagogues, as both institutions and physical

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[43] Ibid, 32.
[44] de Breffny, The Synagogue, 196.
[45] H.A. Meek, The Synagogue (London: Phaidon, 1995), 227.
[46] Sussman, 33-35.
[47] Ibid, 35-36.
[48] "Mordecai Kaplan: Founder of Reconstructionism," *Rabbi Sheinerman's Home Page* [on-line], available at: http://sheinerman.net/judaism/personalities/kaplan.html, 2003.
Modecai Kaplan graduated from the City College of New York, was ordained at the conservative Jewish Theological Seminary, and received a master's degree from Columbia University. In addition, he served as an associate rabbi for an Orthodox synagogue in New York and taught at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He became disenchanted with orthodox theology and interested in alternative approaches to Judaism Over time the new social science field of sociology and the progress in the physical sciences influenced Kaplan. In 1935 he authored *Judaism as a Civilization*, which became the foundation of the Reconstructionist movement.
[49] Sussman, "The Suburbanization of American Judaism as Reflected in Synagogue Buildings and Architecture, 1945-1975," 36.

structures, inadequate to serve as symbols of their cultural heritage.[50] Individual congregations, and their national umbrella organizations, turned to architects, many of whom were Jewish, to create a new building type of suburban synagogues. After 1945, there was a widespread belief throughout the Jewish community that a "true" Jewish style in art and architecture was about to be created and that the synagogue would become a distinctly Jewish building. The Reform movement took the leading role in the architectural development of the suburban synagogue because of its large financial resources and its tradition of reforming the standards of Jewish thought. In 1946, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), the national organization of Reform Judaism, published a guide for congregations considering relocating to the suburbs. The following year, the UAHC sponsored two conferences on synagogue architecture. The UAHC also organized a panel of synagogue architects who traveled throughout the country to meet with congregation building committees. The panel developed a series of guidelines for new synagogue construction, which was subsequently published by the UAHC. In addition, the UAHC published, in 1954, the landmark book, *An American Synagogue for Today and Tomorrow: A Guidebook to Synagogue Design and Construction*. The book was edited by Peter Blake, a well known critic and architect, and included writings from a variety of religious leaders and architects (including Daniel Schwartzman, the architect of Chizuk Amuno).[51]

While the UAHC promoted synagogue architecture at the national level, architects who promoted synagogue design in their professional organizations and journals were contacted by individual congregations. Eric Mendelsohn (1887-1953) and Percival Goodman (1904-1989) were the two architects who had the greatest influence on the design and style of American suburban synagogues after 1945. Mendelsohn established trends in the design of large synagogues and experimented in the use of new building materials. His career began in Germany in the 1920s and was pursued in England and the British State of Palestine. Mendelsohn moved to the United States in 1945 and was involved in synagogue architecture until his death in 1953. Goodman, on the other hand, made major contributions to the design and style of smaller synagogues. From the readings of Martin Buber, a Jewish philosopher and theologian, he developed ideas of intimacy in synagogue construction. His most lasting contribution to synagogue design is possibly the emphasis on the Ark as an external feature, which he thought had the possibility to define a building as a synagogue to the general public.[52]

Some architects during the post-war period attempted to transform the suburban synagogue structure into a literal symbol of Judaism, through such methods as devising plans in the form of the Star of David. In most cases, though, such symbolism was not apparent from the interior of the structures or was so abstract that it was not recognized by most congregants. The post-war synagogues also incorporated general trends of religious institutions of any denomination. For example, architects and planners incorporated multifunctional spaces into their redesigns of synagogues. One of the most notable new features of the suburban synagogue was the expandable sanctuary, which provided additional seating for the High Holidays. Spatial flexibility was employed by linking the sanctuary with the social hall. The presence of an imposing social hall reinforced the

[50] Ibid, 36.
[51] Ibid, 37-38.
[52] Ibid, 39-40.

concept that Judaism was more than just a religion; it was an all-encompassing way of life. Usually equipped with a kitchen and a stage, it could be used for a variety of activities. The religious school was closely modeled after public school buildings and usually did not have any features that identified it as Jewish (the same is true for Catholic schools). For the most part, synagogue schools followed state-wide and national trends towards the use of Modern architecture for new school facilities. Central offices became a noticeable feature of large synagogues, a reflection of the bureaucratic needs of suburban congregations and on the important role granted to office work in the post-war American society.[53]

Suburban Relocation of Baltimore Congregations

The post-war years marked the beginnings of the eventual suburban relocation of most of Baltimore's synagogues. By 1946, one out of every six Americans lived in the suburbs. The rapid spread of new suburbs after the war created an instant building boom of residential, educational, and religious structures (including synagogues), all adopting similar design concepts. In the new communities, the synagogue complexes were typically the only operating Jewish agencies and they truly became the geographic center of Jewish life. As such, new designs that allowed for programmatic flexibility were necessary. As early as the 1940s, plans emerged that included features such as movable partitions and sliding doors that would allow for the conversion of spaces for a variety of uses.[54]

By the end of World War II, Baltimore's German Reform Jews had moved from the mid-town northeast into Upper Park Heights; Eastern European Jews still living in East Baltimore migrated to the newly vacated residences.[55] Throughout the late 1940s the generations reaching adulthood continued to leave the urban area. In general, they relocated to the suburbs where they hoped to "raise their children in single-family homes nestled among green lawns and open areas."[56] With the suburban migration, though, came a loss of the tightly knit Jewish community that had existed in the dense urban neighborhoods. The suburban synagogue complex, with its social, educational, and worship spaces, was designed to provide a surrogate community to its members.[57]

Three of the prominent Reform congregations, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, Har Sinai, and Temple Oheb Shalom, began discussions for relocation plans as early as 1940. Their desire was to move closer to their members who lived at the time in the Pikesville and Stevenson areas. The synagogue leaders collectively understood that they would have to follow their members in order to survive. This was a lesson learned from the Hebrew Friendship Congregation that, after the Civil War, refused to follow their members out of East Baltimore and eventually had to disband the synagogue.[58] Throughout the 1950s and 1960s Jewish families in

[53] Ibid 40-43.
[54] Rachel Wishnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States: History and Interpretation* (Philadelphia: 1955).
[55] Kahn, *Uncommon Threads*, 222.
[56] Schein, *On Three Pillars*, 228.
[57] Ibid 229.
[58] Kahn, *Uncommon Threads*, 222-223.

Baltimore continued to settle and relocate to the northwest suburbs and the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation was the first reform congregation to relocate in 1951. Har Sinai followed in 1959 with a new complex at Park Heights Avenue and Fords Lane, while Temple Oheb Shalom moved to its new complex on the west side of Park Heights in 1961.[59]

The conservative congregations in Baltimore gained popularity in the post-war period. They appealed to young people because they allowed their members to fully participate in a secular life while still maintaining their religious lives. As a result, not only did the conservative congregations have to accommodate a shift to suburban locations, but also a growing membership. As Schein notes, "nationally, migration to suburban areas, coupled with increasing interest in the middle of the road policies of the Conservative movement, had created an explosion of new congregations."[60] The largest conservative congregation in Baltimore, Chizuk Amuno, relocated to Baltimore County in 1961.[61] Twenty families that were displeased with the strict ideologies of the Orthodox Beth Tfiloh synagogue formed an additional conservative congregation, Beth El, in 1947. Although Beth El's first site was near Taney Road, many members soon moved outward. Their first synagogue complex, erected by the congregation in 1960, was north of the city line on Park Heights Avenue, directly behind the Chizuk Amuno site.[62]

Other Jewish facilities soon followed suit. In 1958 the Baltimore Hebrew College relocated to 5800 Park Heights Avenue. Two years later the Jewish Community Center moved to a facility at 5700 Park Heights Avenue. By 1968 there were 106,300 Jews living in greater Baltimore, comprising almost 7% of the total population of the city. Out of this Jewish community, 47% lived in suburban locations. The greatest concentration was in the Upper Park Heights community, with 35.8% of the total Jewish population. In addition, 29.2% lived in Liberty, 14.6% in the Reb Corridor, 10.9% in Lower Park Heights, 5.2% in the downtown, and an additional 4.3% lived in other outlying areas. The Lower Park Heights neighborhood was predominantly Orthodox (55%), while the other communities had a more balanced distribution. Upper Park Heights, with the largest concentration of Jewish residents, was 35% Orthodox, 29% Conservative, and 31% Reform.[63]

Trends in Synagogue Design

The synagogue, from the Greek "sinago", or "to gather", has a triple function in Jewish life. It serves as the house of prayer, house of study, and house of assembly. In other words, the synagogue provides space for worship, educational facilities, and social gathering places.[64] In the introduction to a 1963 exhibit entitled

[59] Ibid.
[60] Schein, *On Three Pillars*, 274.
[61] Kahn, *Uncommon Threads*, 224-225.
[62] Ibid.
[63] "The Jewish Community of Greater Baltimore: A Population Study," completed by the Associated Jewish Chamber of Baltimore, 1968.
[64] Meier, 11.

Recent American Synagogue Architecture, Richard Meier describes this typology as the Jewish people's "most original creation, the mainstay of their cohesiveness, assuring the survival of their group, their cultural identity, and their historical cohesiveness."[65] There have never been any standard definitions or prescribed protocols for synagogue design. While certain implications about the form of the synagogue have been extracted from the Bible, there is no set of rules that architects or congregations must follow. Synagogues thus become an individualized, outward expression of the congregation. In arriving at this end, it is "the problem of the synagogue architect to express in a physical structure the spirit of the Jewish congregation."[66]

The earliest designs for synagogues were by today's standards "a grassroot, democratic form springing up from and encouraging individual initiative and responsibility based on a common understanding of basic needs."[67] Although there are no prescriptions for designing a synagogue, there are some common elements among congregations. The Torah, the most valuable element in the sanctuary, is a "copy of Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, handwritten on parchment about twenty inches high and a foot in diameter."[68] The second ritual element is the Ark, in which the Torah is stored. In addition, an Eternal Light always hangs near the Ark. Other traditional features include a seven-branch candelabra that hangs on one or both sides of the Ark and a representation of the Tablets of Law above the Ark.[69]

The sanctuary of the synagogue is designed with the bema in front of the Ark. The bema should be, but is not always, elevated with three steps. On the bema there is a reading desk, or pulpit, that is used to place the Torah on when unrolled. There is a great amount of flexibility in the arrangement of the bema. Some common patterns consist of placing one reading desk in the center of the bema, in front of the Ark, one unit to either side of the Ark, a mobile unit that can sit in different locations depending on the service, or two separate pulpits on either side of the bema. There are no further guidelines for the shape or dimensions of the sanctuary as a whole.[70] Prior to entering the sanctuary, there is generally a foyer, or gathering space, which functions as the central core of the complex. Generally, all areas of the synagogue facility are accessible from this space.

Historically, Jewish communities have built synagogues that follow the dominant architectural style of the time. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, congregations borrowed the forms of the Greek temple, Moorish mosque, Gothic cathedral, Romanesque church, and even the colonial American church.[71] Early on in America, the immigrant origins of the congregations, along with their religious views and economic conditions, were the dominating factors in synagogue design. Although the Jewish population in America

[65] Meier, 13.
[66] Meier, 10.
[67] Thiry, *Churches and Temples*, 6J.
[68] Ibid, 19J.
[69] Ibid, 20J.
[70] Ibid, 22J.
[71] Meier, 7.

began to flourish in the early 1800s, there were no professional architects or designers within the Jewish community until the 1840s.[72]

Although Jews had settled in America as early as the mid-seventeenth century, it was not until 1730 that the first building was constructed specifically for Jewish worship in New York City. By 1825, Jewish congregations were worshipping in their own buildings in many of the larger cities in the new nation. At this time, neoclassicism was the typical choice for many synagogue designers. The growth of the Jewish population around the mid-nineteenth century directly led to an increased need for houses of worship. Many Jews crowded into urbanized areas and replaced pre-existing Christian communities. Jews commonly acquired former church structures, many of them Gothic in design, and converted them for Jewish liturgical use. The Romanesque revival style was also used for synagogues in the period before the Civil War.[73]

By the mid-1800s, German Jews began to prosper along the Eastern seaboard. As the community organized into distinct congregations, they began to show concern over distinctive features in their synagogue buildings. While synagogues do not have any display of an image or symbol that is thought to have "supernatural" power, the German Jews were the first group to display common Jewish symbols on the exteriors of their buildings. The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, in 1845, was the first synagogue in the United States to display the Star of David on a building; it was visible in one of the synagogue's windows.

Beginning after the Civil War and continuing into the twentieth century, synagogues used Islamic motifs, including Moorish minarets and horseshoe-arched facades. This style was easily differentiated from church design at the time and created a desired visual identification for the minority Jewish groups. However, the Moorish style lacked any true identification with Judaism and remained alien to American sensibilities. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, a new interest in the planning of the synagogue emerged. There was a shift from the basilican plan, which had characterized Moorish synagogues, to a more central orientation. The dome is the architectural form that was most often used to emphasize this new approach. Then in the early twentieth century synagogue architecture experienced a new phase. The archeological discovery of ancient synagogues in Galilee justified the use of Greco-Roman designs. Although antiquity became the most popular reference in the first quarter of the twentieth century, other historical periods were also represented.[74]

During the 1920s, many of the historical elements that characterized synagogues were derived from Byzantine architecture. The layout of Byzantine churches could easily be adapted to a centrally planned synagogue. Another advantage was the characteristic simplicity in the block-like forms of a polygonal Byzantine structure. Although new advances in technology had freed architecture of the load-bearing wall and massive stone buttress, synagogues in the 1920s continued to feature these traditional forms. The onset of the Great

[72] Rachel Wishnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States*.
[73] *Two Hundred Years of Synagogue Architecture* (Waltham, Mass: 1976), 9-13.
[74] Ibid, 13-17.

Depression in the 1930s brought a virtual halt to synagogue construction in the United States, although experimentation with new forms continued throughout Europe.[75]

The earliest synagogues in America were generally single buildings, with the primary space dedicated to worship, and smaller rooms for educational and social functions. Due to their urban locations, many of the social gatherings for the congregation could be held at other nearby locations. Beginning in the 1920s, as households left the traditional neighborhoods behind, a trend to build Jewish centers emerged in an effort to provide for the social and cultural needs of the congregation. These synagogue centers existed in addition to the broad-based, community-oriented Jewish Social Centers that served the community at large.[76]

During World War II, architects in the United States began experimenting with the concept of multi-purpose space and flexible design for synagogues. The most common flexible space included in modern synagogues was the combination of the sanctuary and social hall. The social hall was almost always included in synagogue design, illustrating the importance of the festive meals in celebration of the various Jewish holidays. To provide increased seating flexibility, particularly in smaller synagogues, this space was often situated adjacent to the sanctuary and separated with a removable wall. Other common elements in modern synagogue complexes were classrooms, administrative offices, a library, memorial walls, the mechanical plant, and kitchen(s). Additional gathering space was also commonly provided by the inclusion of an outdoor courtyard.[77]

After World War II, there was a popular revolution in American spirituality. After the Holocaust, many American Jews renewed their religious and cultural identity. This increase in membership and changing demographics led to an unprecedented number of newly constructed synagogues. During this building frenzy, architects in the U.S. began to use the idiom of the Modern Movement in synagogue design, which was influenced by the architectural experimentation of pre-war Europe. Eric Mendelsohn, a German born architect, was the first to produce an outstanding post-World War II synagogue, the Congregation B'nai Amoona in St. Louis (c.1946).[78] Its layout enabled the seating capacity to be doubled for the high holidays by linking the prayer hall, foyer, and auditorium with folding walls. This "flexible plan" was revolutionary at the time.[79]

There were still no standard rules for exterior synagogue design, except that "Biblical law says the orientation should be toward Jerusalem" and that the "synagogue should be on the highest land in the community and should be the highest building."[80] Also common on the exterior are two freestanding columns flanking the main entrance to the building. Paul Thiry, in his discussion of synagogue design, notes that contemporary synagogues "are planned so that each of the various parts expresses its own essential spirit: sanctuaries, the

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[75] Ibid, 17.
[76] Rachel Wishnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States*.
[77] Thiry, *Churches and Temples*, 23-25J.
[78] Information on the B'nai Amoona synagogue can be found in Kathleen James' *In the Spirit of Our Age: Eric Mendelsohn's B'nai Amoona Synagogue* (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 2000).
[79] *Two Hundred Years of American Synagogue Architecture*, 30.
[80] Thiry, *Churches and Temples*, 25J.

center of religious life, tend to express mass and, by means of greater height, to dominate other elements; social halls, often larger in area than the prayer hall, are usually endowed with greater glass areas which let in light and create a cheerful atmosphere; and the educational and administrative functions are revealed as spreading, many-windowed wings."[81]

Percival Goodman, one of the most prominent modernist synagogue architects, believed there were five key elements to successful synagogue design. First, he emphasized that the tradition of the congregation and their service should "establish the whole tone and feeling of the building." In addition, the best skills, most advanced engineering, and best materials should be employed. Intimacy was essential. The design of the sanctuary should allow as many people as possible to sit as close as possible to the bema. Goodman also believed that there was no substantial difference in the sanctity of the parts of the synagogue and that the educational, social, and worship spaces should all receive equal emphasis. The only ritual element that Goodman called for is to have two menorahs flanking the Ark.[82]

The post-war trends in synagogue design are highly significant and represent a genuine change in the design of synagogues. In the years following World War II, the suburban version of the synagogue complex was elaborated and there was a dramatic turn to Modernism as the architectural solution for the new buildings. By the mid-twentieth century, Jews no longer accepted structures that were not representative of their heritage. Jewish services in a Gothic atmosphere seemed anachronistic. The lack of traditional temple architecture enabled Modernism to become the language of the suburban synagogues of the new American Jewish communities.[83] Another trend after WWII was synagogue complexes that included "monumental" chapels, which were clearly distinct religious spaces. Frank Lloyd Wright's Temple Beth Shalom (c.1956) in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania was the most publicized post-war synagogue. The plan resembled the Star of David and the building had a tripod roof, which Wright hoped would suggest both Mount Sinai and the tent tabernacles of the ancient Hebrews. This tent theme is the most popular idiom in modern American synagogue architecture. Symbolic programs went hand in hand with these historical allusions. Generally, these building types were not as successful because their form was compromised in order to exhibit their chosen symbol.[84]

The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation's suburban synagogue complex represents the beginning of a national trend towards a new building form for Jewish religious structures. Constructed in the late 1940s, it was one of the earliest Modernist synagogues in both the mid-Atlantic region and in the nation as a whole. It set a standard for excellence in expression that the other new Baltimore suburban synagogue complexes emulated in spirit if not in the precise details of design. One of Percival Goodman's remarkable achievements in architecture, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation is extensively highlighted in Elman and Giral's *Percival Goodman: architect – planner – teacher – painter*, a text highlighting the work of this master architect. The congregation has long

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[81] Ibid.
[82] *Recent American Synagogue Architecture* (New York: 1963), 21.
[83] Matthew Fitzsimmons, *The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation* (College Park, Md: 2002), 7.
[84] *Recent American Synagogue Architecture*, 31-33.

been recognized nationally as one of the most important in American Jewish history. It was the first congregation in Baltimore, a city known for its prominent place in American Judaism, and it blazed the trail for Chizuk Amuno, Beth El, and Temple Oheb Shalom in the postwar suburban era.

Artwork in Synagogues

Traditionally, there are three main types of artwork in the synagogue: symbols, ritual objects, and decorative works. Paul Thiry, Richard M. Bennett, and Henry L. Kamphoefner in *Churches and Temples* mention that "only the artist can revitalize the familiar objects and images so that they convey a meaning and a feeling transcending the inherent reality of the devices themselves."[85] Most designers of synagogue artwork use functional objects to represent Jewish symbols and concepts, but there is the need for the artist to express the deeper purposes they embody. As architectural historian Avram Kampf points out, Modernist synagogues in particular, because of the strictly rationalized principles of their design, "need the intensification of the meaning of the building, the externalization of its spirit; they need some of the warmth, eloquence and passion of an individual work of art."[86]

Particularly as the synagogue has become a multi-functional complex in which the prayer hall is but one component, art has come to play increasingly prominent roles in its cultural and religious expression. To begin with, art fulfills the traditional need for "Hiddur Mitzvah (the artistic work which is done to adorn religious objects and actions)." In addition to artistic expression that will stimulate worship, many congregations desire an environment appropriately indicative of the social status of the congregants. Then, too, artistic works such as sculpture and the embellishment of the synagogue doors enable congregations to identify with and to announce themselves to the surrounding community. Art can also express "communal pride and personal identification with the synagogue," particularly when it captures the values and spirit of a congregation. Many lay leaders believe art should form part of the educational program and become, for example, a meaningful activity that children learn from. Still others "seek an art which is relevant, which increases consciousness of belonging, spiritual awareness, [and] an historical understanding of the group." Thus art comes into the mid-twentieth century Modern synagogue as an activity directed toward increasing communality, assisting the traditional requirements of the worship service, creating a stimulating and inviting environment, and incorporating new cultural activities into the increasing complex program it sponsors.[87]

Modern art has struck a resonant chord for many mid-century suburban congregations in the United States. Its sources of appeal are varied. For some congregants who uphold the prohibition of the Second Commandment, abstract art is more palatable than traditions of classical representation. As the dominant art form at the time, modern art placed "the synagogue within the main stream of modern life." In its various manifestations,

[85] Thiry, *Churches and Temples,* 34J.
[86] Kampf, *Contemporary Synagogue Art* ,30.
[87] Ibid., 26.

modern art is capable of communicating important truths and inward states of mind with great effectiveness. Suburban synagogues possess examples of contemporary art that express a range of themes from traditional biblical symbols, such as the burning bush, the revelation on Mt. Sinai, and the menorah, to ideas of spirituality and mystery, democratic ideals of social justice, and the Jewish peoples' struggle for acceptance.[88] Works of art manifest on the exteriors of buildings—as sculpture, mosaics, murals, pylons, or inscriptions; in vestibules—where they help prepare worshippers for the more spiritual mood of the prayer hall; in worship spaces—especially adorning ritual objects, such as the Ark, the Torah, the Eternal Light, Menorahs, and stained glass; and in galleries, museums, memorial walls, educational spaces, and sometimes social halls.[89] Perhaps the quintessential example of the integration of art and architecture in a mid-century synagogue is Percival Goodman's Congregation B'nai Israel in Millburn, New Jersey (1951). There Goodman selected three struggling abstract artists to enhance a modest synagogue he had designed in the outer suburbs of New York City. Among the striking results were Herbert Ferber's dramatic sculpture of the Burning Bush on the exterior façade, Robert Motherwell's semi-abstract decorative mural in the vestibule, and Adolph Gottlieb's Torah curtain in velvet appliqué.[90] A similar quality of the integration of art and architecture seen in B'nai Israel is achieved in different ways in Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, Chizuk Amuno, Beth El, and Temple Oheb Shalom in suburban Baltimore.

History of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, or "Nidche Yisroel" ("The Scattered of Israel") began in 1830 as an Orthodox congregation. It was the first Jewish congregation chartered in both Baltimore and the State of Maryland. The first rabbi, Abraham Rice, was a major champion of orthodoxy in the country. The congregation was comprised of German Jews who had immigrated to the United States, and from 1840-1849 Rabbi Rice delivered the sermons only in German. At the congregation's start, there were only twelve members who worshipped in several downtown locations. They were strict in their Orthodoxy of ritual and closely observed the old laws of Judaism. Some of their early meeting locations included a room over a grocery store on Bond and Fleet Street (1830-32), an existing building on North Exeter Street (1832-35), a one-story dwelling on High Street (1835-37), and a three-story house at the corner of Harrison and Etna Lane (1837-45). The house at Harrison and Etna Lane was also the site of the congregation's first Mikvah – a building or room in which the ritual bath takes place.[91]

In 1845, the congregation built the first synagogue in Maryland, the third in the United States. The architecturally significant synagogue was located on Watson and Lloyd Streets in downtown Baltimore. The Lloyd Street synagogue was built in the Greek Revival style and was dedicated on September 26, 1845. The

[88] Ibid., 54.
[89] Ibid, 88, 125, 140-173.
[90] Ibid., 75-86.
[91] Ibid, 5.

sanctuary sat 280 people and the building had a basement with two schoolrooms and a large weekday chapel. [92] The building was designed by Robert Carey Long, Jr., a well-known architect and Baltimore native. Long was born around 1819 and is credited with also designing the Baltimore Athenaeum, Mt. Calvary Church, St. Alphonsus Church, and the Franklin Street Presbyterian church, among others. This building had the Star of David displayed in a large stained glass window above the Ark and visible from the street. This was the first time in the United States that a Jewish congregation displayed symbols of its faith on the exterior of a structure. Until this point the only decoration with Jewish symbolism used in synagogue design was the Slab of the Two Tablets of Law and the Eternal Light (the lamp burning in front of the Ark). The Lloyd Street synagogue was highlighted in Rachel Wischnitzer's *Synagogue Architecture in the United States* (1955) and Oscar Israelowitz's *Synagogues of the United States: A Photographic and Architectural Survey* (1992). This structure still stands in downtown Baltimore and only two other existing synagogues in the United States pre-date the Lloyd Street building. The building is now owned by the Jewish Historical Society of Maryland, which purchased the site in 1963. In 1978, the Lloyd Street synagogue was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1871, the congregation aligned itself with the Reform movement. This was a progressive branch of Judaism that allowed for more flexibility in services and practices. With the transition to Reform, many members became dissatisfied with the synagogue and broke apart to form the Chizuk Amuno Congregation. After the conversion to Reform, the congregation allowed organ music during the service and used the Reform Prayer book, which contained shorter English prayers.[93]

As the congregation members began to relocate to the northwest areas of Baltimore, the synagogue decided it needed to follow its members. Settled Jewish families in the older parts of Baltimore had begun to move towards the western portions of the city, causing a reduction in the membership of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. In 1891, a new synagogue was constructed on the corner of Madison Avenue and Robert Street in northwest Baltimore. When this synagogue was constructed it was "one of the grandest and most imposing structures of the kind in the country.... Of Byzantine architecture, the tiled dome and two towers rising 105 feet were landmarks for the community."[94] The Madison Street synagogue was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and was designed by Charles L. Carson. Prior to moving into their second home, the congregation temporarily moved into the former First Methodist Church at Fayette and Charles Streets.

Suburban Relocation and Development of the Synagogue Complex

By 1943, the congregation had again decided that relocation was necessary. They purchased the Wolf House on Park Heights Avenue in hopes of converting it to a new Temple Center. It was thought that this location would

[92] Rachel Wischnitzer, *Synagogue Architecture in the United States: History and Interpretation* (Philadelphia: 1955).
[93] Matthew Fitzsimmons, "The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation," College Park, Md: 2002, 5.
[94] "Farewell services held..."

be the optimal site for the congregation's members. There had been a steady trend of German-Jewish residents relocating to the Park Heights and Forest Park areas. The congregation's Temple Building and Advisory Committee began deliberations about the new project several years before construction began. Their meetings focused on the program's specific requirements. Their research included reading about and inspecting noteworthy synagogues and churches in Baltimore and other cities, and reviewing their architectural features.[95] They took recommendations from across the country and compiled a list of outstanding architects who had already designed synagogues. The committee interviewed each candidate and examined his past commissions and confidential reports from clients. In the end, they selected Percival Goodman – mainly as a result of his extensive training and background in synagogue architecture. In addition, Goodman was a close friend of the Rothschild family, prominent congregation members.[96]

Goodman chose to design a Modern building, indicating his desire to build in the style of the time. Before World War I synagogue design had not followed a set stylistic idiom. For instance, the Lloyd Street Synagogue displayed Greek Revival facades and interiors, while the Madison Avenue Synagogue was influenced by Moorish architecture.[97] The first synagogue completed by Goodman was the Congregation B'nai Israel, in Millburn, New Jersey. The design for this building started in 1949 and the synagogue was complete by 1951. The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation was one of the first three synagogue commissions Goodman received. Hall, Border and Donaldson[98], a Baltimore firm, served as the affiliated local architect, Fred N. Severed from New York worked as the structural engineer, and Paul Wunderlich from New York was the mechanical engineer.[99]

Goodman's commitment to user-friendly design is visible in the layout of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. The building reflected the outgrowth of classical traditions in a modernist language. The monumental façade of the Synagogue is stripped down to the basic masses and materials. Red brick produced locally in Maryland is ubiquitously used for the building's envelope. The tight running bond is reminiscent of Goodman's modern, sleek skin of the 1938 Smithsonian Gallery of Art Competition drawings. He utilized limestone to accent the portico and windows. The triple bay portico recalled the Temple Center purchased in 1945 on Park Heights Avenue. The 100-foot set back from Park Heights Avenue allows the massive structure to co-exist

[95] "A Willing Heart…" New Building Promotions: from the Maryland Jewish Museum – Rabbi Uri Miller, Organizations and Projects – BHC 1947 (11) 1995.173.33.
[96] "The Building of the Tabernacle," Pamphlet printed by Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.
[97] Matthew Fitzsimmons, *The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation*, College Park, Md: 2002, 10.
[98] The partners of Hall, Border and Donaldson were Howard G. Hall, Howard Border, and Millard E. Donaldson. The firm was in existence from 1947 to 1953. Other works completed by the firm during this period included the Baltimore Federal Savings & Loan (1950), Graceland Park School in Baltimore (1951), Mess Hall addition at the U.S. Naval Academy (1953), and the Faith Presbyterian Church in Baltimore (1953).
[99] Ibid, 12-13.

harmoniously with the rolling landscape and large, old trees. A long stone wall extended from the façade, masking the Charlesworth Road parking lot.[100]

Goodman created flexible space within the complex to accommodate the need for additional seats during the High Holiday services. A curtain partition separated the main sanctuary from the two side wings. The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation School was located in a wing that bridged the social hall and the Temple Center to the north. The plans for the complex draw influence from early modernist plans, like the pinwheel plan for the canonical Bauhaus building in Dessau (Walter Gropius, 1925) or Goodman's own entry submission for the Smithsonian Gallery of Art Competition.[101]

Inside the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, Goodman sparingly used wood and metal for visual and tactile accents. He designated wrought iron for stair and balcony railings, and bronze for floor plates. Birch plywood was installed inside the sanctuary and social hall to accent the doors, while oak plywood was used in ancillary spaces like the foyers and vestibule of the temple and the social hall. Terrazzo, marble, and slate were utilized as floor surfaces.[102]

The basic plan involved both functional and spiritual elements. The layout of the social hall and school behind the sanctuary allowed for the potential expansion needs of the congregation, which Goodman foresaw as necessary. In the 1960s the synagogue was [considerably] enlarged to accommodate a growing membership. In the early 1950s there were 1200 families and by the early 1960s, membership had grown to 1700 families. Local architects Bonnett and Brandt were hired to oversee these additions, which respected the spirit of Goodman's original design. In the late 1960s a youth center, a larger auditorium (the Dalsheimer Auditorium), a small chapel (the Hoffberger chapel), the Fink Assembly room, spacious administrative offices, and additions to the school were completed. A new auditorium replaced the old Strauss Auditorium. As a result, the congregation removed the stage from the Strauss Auditorium to increase the room's capacity for dining.[103]

Although the 1960s additions drastically altered the synagogue complex, these changes were foreseen by the congregation and Goodman and still extend the spirit of the original design, thus maintaining the building's integrity. These later additions did not alter the primary façade along Park Heights Avenue and mostly extended the complex to the rear of the site. One of the primary reasons for choosing a suburban location was the availability of land to accommodate the congregation as it grew. Thus the expansion of the complex was a natural and expected evolution of the synagogue.

The massing and materials of both the original portion of the building and later additions unify the functions of the synagogue – worship, social use, administration, and education. The primary façade of the building facing

[100] Ibid, 14.
[101] Ibid, 15.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Rose Greenberg, *The Chronicle of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, 1830 – 1975*, Baltimore: Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, 1976: 65, 72-74.

Park Heights Avenue is of the massive temple front and portico entrance, while other uses are extended to the rear of the site. The influence of the automobile on the new suburban landscape is evidenced by the large parking lot included in the design of the site. This parking area is located to the rear of the building and is not visible from Park Heights Avenue, thus maintaining the boldness of the synagogue structure and landscaping, as viewed by passing cars. This is a significant continuation of Goodman's original intent to mask vehicular parking with landscaping.[104]

Percival Goodman

Percival Goodman (1904-1989) was one of the nation's most prolific synagogue designers, with nearly fifty such buildings to his credit. He was born in New York City on January 13, 1904. His mother was a descendant of a Dutch-Jewish family. At the age of thirteen, he began working in his uncle's architecture firm. His uncle sent him to Cooper Union to learn drafting and subsequently to the Beaux-Arts Institute of Design. In his free time, Goodman read about architecture and other fields. He took lessons in drawing, perspective, and architectural drafting from a retired professor, David Varon, with whom he boarded for a time. He also became fluent in French during this period.

Before he was twenty, Goodman left his uncle's practice and began working for John Peterkin, where he rose through the ranks to become a lead designer. Peterkin encouraged Goodman to study abroad and he attended the summer program at the Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts.[105] In 1924, Goodman submitted drawings for the Paris Prize Competition and finished as the runner-up. The following year, he worked with a French professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Jacques Carlu, and won the prize. As a result of winning the Paris Prize, he was sent to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he received formal architectural training.

Although, Goodman's prize-winning drawings reflected his Beaux-Arts educational background, he soon developed an interest in the Modernist movement from his various readings. In Paris, he studied under Emmanuel Pontremoli, the only Jewish professor of architecture at the school. Although he never received a diplome from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the experience allowed him to travel and establish friendships with artists and architects in Europe.[106]

In 1928, Goodman returned to the United States and established a partnership with a long-time acquaintance, Franklin Whitman. Goodman obtained success designing International Style residences. The firm of Whitman and Goodman lasted until the Great Depression. During the 1930s, Goodman relied on client optimism, success at architectural competitions, and commissions for garages and laundries to make ends meet. Lack of work allowed him time to read and write. He submitted articles to various journals such as *Architectural Progress* and became the architectural editor for *Trend*, a short-lived avant-garde magazine. He became interested in

[104] Matthew Fitzsimmons, "The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation," College Park, Md: 2002, 17.
[105] Isabelle Gournay, "Architecture at the Fontainebleau School of Fine Arts 1923-1939," *Journal of the Society of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 45 no. 3 (September 1986): 270-285.
[106] Matthew Fitzsimmons, "The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation," College Park, Md: 2002, 17.

urban design and in 1947, he co-authored, with his brother Paul, *Communitas*, a plan for ideal communities that expressed Goodman's interest in the avant-garde and communitarian ideals. *Communitas* was a very significant and widely read text. Paul Goodman was trained as a writer and collaborated with Percival on a number of essays. In addition, Paul was one of the most prominent radical and progressive thinkers of the twentieth century and Percival shared many of his brother's views. Their typical work process would involve Percival setting forth problems and Paul asking questions, then Paul would formulate and write their position and Percival would critique it.[107]

After World War II, Goodman joined the faculty at Columbia University. His religious identity also became strengthened because of the Holocaust and the formation of the State of Israel. Goodman was born Jewish, but was unfamiliar with the traditions of his faith. The Holocaust brought about a religious transformation in him and awakened a deep sense of belonging to a larger Jewish community.[108] In 1947, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the reform umbrella organization, invited him to be a guest lecturer for their symposium on synagogue design, where he discussed modern architecture. This lecture led to his commission for his first synagogues, including the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.[109]

Throughout his career, Goodman designed houses, schools, and public buildings, as well as religious institutions. His only other project in Maryland was the Rothschild House in Pikesville. This house was a single-family custom-made home built in 1950 for artist Amalie Rothschild (who designed the tapestries for Baltimore Hebrew Congregation).[110] While best known for his synagogue work, Goodman is well known as an urban theorist and one of the earliest critics of urban renewal programs. He was also an architect, planner, and artist. During his lifetime he taught at New York University, Columbia University, and in Cambridge, England. He was also known for asking many modern artists to contribute to his designs. He was elected a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.[111]

Among modernist synagogue designers, Goodman was one of the most prolific. With his brother, Paul, he wrote essays on the problem of suburban synagogues, published in the journal *Progressive Commentary*. As Goodman believed that Judaism lacked architectural precedents, he suggested constructing synagogues that were a mix of traditional principles and innovative design, while preserving the traditions of the Jewish faith. He was inspired by the Jewish custom of service and congregation. In his synagogue designs, he placed emphasis on the act of worship, or the reading of the Law. He often elevated the bema to enable all worshippers to hear the readings. In many of his synagogues, Goodman included exterior elements that

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[107] Taylor Stoehr, "The Goodman Brothers and *Communitas*," *Percival Goodman: Architect, Planner, Teacher, Painter*, edited by Kimberly J. Elman and Angela Giral (New York: 2001), 23-24.
[108] Kimberly J. Elman and Angela Giral, eds, *Percival Goodman: architect – planner – teacher – painter* (New York: 2000), 53-60. This is the most authoritative source of information on Percival Goodman.
[109] Matthew Fitzsimmons, "The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation," College Park, Md: 2002, 4.
[110] Naomi Goodman, "A Memoir," *Percival Goodman: Architect, Planner, Teacher, Painter*, edited by Kimberly J. Elman and Angela Giral (New York: 2001), 175.
[111] Paul Goldberger, "Percival Goodman, 85, Synagogue Designer, Dies," *The New York Times* (12 October 1989): 12.

expressed the image of the interior Ark. In this manner, the building could be identified by the onlooker as a synagogue, much as a steeple identifies a Christian church. By focusing on the specific needs of each individual congregation, Goodman made his synagogues unique.[112]

Goodman urged congregations to focus on the ornaments that received the most attention and to eliminate any superficial decoration. For example, he believed that columns should not be decorated because their role is purely structural and they do not play any part in the service. On the other hand, the cover of the Ark, the Eternal Light, and the menorah deserved embellishment.[113] Goodman's interest in ornamentation and decoration exemplifies his desire for an alliance between architecture and art. In a synagogue, Goodman believed, the artwork should be integrated into the everyday experience of the congregation. He often recommended that building committees hire modern Jewish artists for paintings, sculpture, and tapestries and therefore encourage a renaissance of Jewish artistry.[114]

Through his synagogue designs, Goodman hoped to foster a sense of community among congregants. The complex served to center the dispersed Jewish community through social gatherings, professional networking, and organized youth activities. Goodman viewed the synagogue as a building that was used everyday for a variety of activities, not simply worship. His architecture gave equal consideration to the three main functions of the synagogue – the liturgical, the educational, and the social – and integrated all three parts into a unified design.[115] He did not rely on historical allusions or symbolic programs in his structures.

Some of his other early synagogues included the B'nai Israel of Millburn, New Jersey (c.1951), the Beth El Temple of Providence, Rhode Island (c.1947-1953), and Beth El in Springfield, Massachusetts (c.1953). Goodman's design for Baltimore Hebrew Congregation reflects the beginnings of his design process for synagogues that became refined over time. The synagogue is still rather Classical in its symmetry and represents a transition between Classical motifs and Modernism in the work of Percival Goodman. The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation's simplicity of form appears to be more of a diagram of his theories than the sculptural forms of his later synagogues like Congregation Sha'arey Zedek. His later designs (after his work at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation) exhibited a vertical emphasis in the sanctuary, which contrasted with the horizontal wings.

Goodman's most famous synagogue was built for the Congregation Sha'arey Zedek in Southfield, Michigan (1963). This work was completed in collaboration with Albert Kahn. The building includes a large sanctuary space with an a-frame front façade, the point of which appears to symbolize reaching towards the sky. The complex also contains social space, classrooms, and an auditorium. The interior of the sanctuary has protruding beams along the slanted roof of the a-frame structure. The back wall of the Bema has a massive Ark and a series

[112] Matthew Fitzsimmons, "The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation," College Park, Md: 2002, 9-10.
[113] Ibid, 10-11.
[114] Ibid, 11.
[115] Ibid, 12.

of slanted rectangular stained-glass windows that, when taken together, form a triangular pattern following the a-frame façade. In addition to Sha'arey Zedek, Goodman also completed the Congregation Beth El synagogue complex in Rochester, New York (with Todd and Giroux). This complex has a massive front façade, but with predominantly rounded forms. The synagogue contains a large sanctuary, placed at the front of the site. Other synagogues include the Temple Beth El in Providence (1948-1955), Fairmount Temple in Cleveland (1950-1955), Temple Beth El in Gary, Indiana (1952-1954), and the Temple Beth Shalom in Miami Beach (1953-1954).

Overall, Percival Goodman was one of the foremost architects of Modern synagogue complexes in the United States. Together with architects such as Eric Mendelsohn, Phillip Johnson, and Pietro Belluschi, he transformed the way in which people of Jewish faith congregated, worshiped, and were educated. He made a tremendous impact on the landscape of predominately Jewish suburbs with massive, architecturally significant synagogue complexes that contributed to a new way of life for many Jewish-Americans.

His modernist expression has stood the test of time and remains a proud and somber landmark in the landscape of northwest Baltimore. The members of the congregation continue to utilize the facilities around the clock for school, social meetings, exhibition of artwork, and religious services. Goodman unified a dispersed community and built a communal center in a sprawling suburban neighborhood where Baltimore's oldest congregation could continue to grow and prosper.[116]

Artwork at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation was one of the very first synagogues in Maryland to hire modern artists to create artwork for the new suburban Jewish centers. Goodman's handpicked artists fulfilled his vision for contemporary synagogue artwork. Their works were various interpretations of Jewish traditions and symbols. The selection of artists from around the country helped promote the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation as an exemplary planned, designed, and executed Reform Temple in the United States and adds a major dimension to the significance of the synagogue complex.

Several aspects of Goodman's approach to integrating art and architecture in synagogue design distinguish Baltimore Hebrew Congregation in the context of synagogue art nationally. Goodman was committed to fashioning an expression of the congregation in the intimate scale of the human rather the monumental. Thus his interiors were modest, and their art high quality but designed to evoke memories meaningful to the congregation. Second, although "among Orthodox Jews, a long tradition forbids the portrayal of man in synagogue decoration," Baltimore Hebrew Congregation allowed the inclusion of human figures since "human figures were introduced in synagogue art by the Reform and Conservative branches of Judaism."[117] Third, at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, as in many of Goodman's synagogues, the art did not take a back seat to the

[116] Ibid, 19-20.
[117] Weldon Wallace, "Windows Portray Jewish History," *Baltimore Sun*, December 9, 1968.

architecture; the artists Goodman selected were empowered to articulate their own themes and to speak to the interests and values of the congregation. Fourth, Goodman achieved a balance between a comprehensively designed complex—the principal works of art were deliberately commissioned, not added piecemeal over the years—and one that respected the autonomy of the art and the artist. The result was an environment that created a warm and spiritually convivial atmosphere in the synagogue.[118] Fifth, the artwork, especially within the sanctuary, highlights the transition to Modernism within Judaism. All of the art was completed in a contemporary style that illustrates the congregation's acceptance of Modern design for their buildings as well as for traditional Jewish symbols (such as the Ark, the Menorah, and the Eternal Light).

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation's artwork is also significant in and of itself. Some of the work was completed by local artists such as Amalie Rothschild (also a congregant), while additional pieces were commissioned from nationally-prominent sculptors, muralists, and stained glass artists. The artwork is of uniformly high quality. Throughout this period of Modern synagogue construction within the United States, artwork became a key element of the overall design. Baltimore Hebrew Congregation was at the forefront of this trend. Not only was the synagogue one of the earliest Modern complexes nationally, it was also the first to incorporate commissioned, professional Modern artwork into the design from the onset, resulting in a totally designed complex.

Amalie Rothschild (1916-2000): Ark Tapestries

Amalie Rothschild designed the colorful four-panel parochet (the tapestry covering the Ark) in the sanctuary. The women of the Sisterhood executed her needlepoint design.[119] A native of Baltimore, Rothschild received her training in the arts and design in fashion illustration at the Maryland Institute College of Art (1932-1934) and the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts. Rothschild worked as a commercial artist in fashion illustration for a number of years, during which she continued to paint. Her work explored her role as a woman, a mother, and an artist, and more universally the role of women in society. Rothschild produced work in various styles, including Cubism, Abstract Expressionism, and Abstraction. She was a frequent contributor to art exhibitions in both Baltimore and Washington, D.C. She held her first one-person show in 1942 at the Baltimore Museum of Art in which she exhibited a series of romantic, realist paintings. She was a member of the Artists' Union of Baltimore and served as their president from 1948-1950. In 1948, she began teaching adult art classes and in 1958 taught at the Metropolitan School of Art. In 1959, Rothschild participated in the founding of Gallery One, an independent artists' cooperative in Baltimore. From 1960 to 1968, she taught painting at Goucher College. Rothschild produced artwork for several Maryland institutions including a mural for Town House Motor Hotel in Baltimore (c.1958), a wall hanging for the Sun Life Insurance Company of America home office in the Charles Center (c.1968), an architectural panel design for the Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School in Baltimore, a plexiglass and aluminum window design for the Forest Park High School in Baltimore, an aluminum sculpture at Towson State University, and a wall hanging designed for the Graham

[118] Kampf, Contemporary Synagogue Art, 37, 41.
[119] Matthew Fitzsimmons, "The Baltimore Hebrew Congregation," College Park, Md: 2002, 17.

Auditorium of the Walters Art Museum. She also contributed to cultural life in Baltimore through the founding of the annual Druid Hill Park exhibitions that showed the work of young artists. In early 1982, she helped select the artists to create murals for the Baltimore subway.[120]

The Ark curtain for Baltimore Hebrew Congregation was designed in 1951 and exhibited in 1952 at the Jewish Museum in New York City before installation at the synagogue. The tapestry covers the sliding doors of the Ark and consists of four 3½'x5' needlework panels. Rothschild, after completing her design, transferred the pattern to the cloth, outlined the design in wool, and attached samples of each color to the spaces as a working guide for the ladies of the Temple Sisterhood. Represented are the forty years of wandering of the Jewish people in the wilderness, the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, and the Tabernacle in the desert. Although the designs are abstract and symbolic in nature, they represent very specific religious and spiritual beliefs.

The outer panels display spiritual symbolism. Facing the congregation on the extreme left the design represents the "Ten Commandments, surrounded by the light of truth, emerging from the chaos of the storm, broken tablets symbolizing the weakness of man, and water gushing from the rock, suggesting the power of God."[121] To the extreme right are "the wings of the guiding angel, manna from heaven, rams' horns and shafts of light to express exaltation."[122] The central sections of the tapestry symbolize the earthly aspects of Judaism including "motifs of burning incense, showbread, wine jug, candelabra, anointing oil, and other ritualistic accoutrements."[123] Along the bottom of all four panels is an undulating pattern that "symbolizes the wanderings of the Jewish people and serves to create a decorative continuity."[124]

George Aarons (1896-1980): Façade Sculptures

George Aarons designed and executed the sculptures on the sanctuary's façade. The Lithuanian born artist immigrated with his family to the United States at age ten. He worked out of his studios in Brookline and Gloucester, Massachusetts and received his art training at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts School and the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York. His work was exhibited at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. He was also a member of the National Sculpture Society.[125] His commissions included a ten-foot relief for housing projects in South Boston, four reliefs for the O.S.C. Office of the Secretary of the Treasury, reliefs for a post office in Ripley, Missouri, work at Brandeis University and the University of Connecticut, and a relief in metal for the Hillel Houses of Boston University.

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[120] "Amalie Rothschild," *Maryland Art Source* <http://www.marylandartsource.org/artists/detail_000000107.html>
[121] Wharton, Carol, "Artists Shower Talent on a New Synagogue," *Baltimore Sun*, May 4, 1952.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] "The Sculptures on the Façade of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation," Pamphlet published by Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.

Aarons was hired to design and sculpt the panels after the masonry had already been installed on the façade. He adapted his designs to fit the size, shape and placement of the pre-existing panels. All of the sculpting was completed on-site by the artist. Avram Kampf perceives that "given the complexity of the relationship of art to modern architecture, [Aarons'] application of sculpture to the building, the choice of theme, and its execution have doubtlessly been very successful."[126] While the original concept was to have the panels express abstract ideas rather than specific episodes from the Bible, this idea was changed during the design process. The themes chosen were, instead, "rooted in the congregation's tradition and lore."[127]

The eight-paneled façade sculpture is illustrated in Avram Kampf's *Contemporary Synagogue Art*. The sculptures express the ethical ideals of Judaism "as conceived by the spiritual leaders of [the] community." The eight panels are arranged in three vertical strips, with three panels on the right and left, and two in the center. A representation of the Tablets of Law is in the central position, and is the largest of all the panels. When looking at the façade, the right portion of the Tablets of Law is carved with rising flames that symbolizes man's duty to God, while the left panel is "stamped with an earthy, clod-like texture" representing man's duty towards man. Below the Tablets in the central portion is a panel depicting the creation of man, which "seems to spring forth from a wave pulled by the unseen hand of the Lord."[128]

The six remaining panels are carved to depict important ethical concepts. In the upper left panel, the prophet Nathan is depicted rebuking King David for his sin with Bathsheba. This scene alludes to the emphasis in the Jewish faith on justice and the equality of justice without regard to position in life. The middle panel on the left illustrates Moses holding the Tablets of Law at Mount Sinai, symbolizing the Jewish concept that "we are entrusted with the Law only as long as we guard and obey it." The bottom left panel represents liberty by showing two slaves breaking out of bondage. The upper right sculpture is of Ruth and Naomi representing loyalty and love. A representation of the verse from Isaiah, "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares," is in the central right position and symbolizes the quest for peace. Finally, the bottom right panel illustrates the sacrifice of Isaac and the need for complete faith and perfect obedience to God.[129] The figures in the panels move alternatively towards and away from the center. In addition, the background of each panel has a rough finish, while the protruding figures are smooth. The panels are quite large; for example, the *Exodus* panel (bottom panel on the left side) measures 8'x4'. Besides enlivening the wall above the main entrance to the sanctuary, the sculptures intensify the meaning of walking into the prayer hall.[130]

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[126] Avram Kampf, *Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965* (New York: 1966), 95.
[127] Ibid., 95.
[128] Ibid, 93.
[129] "The Basic Ideals of Judaism: The Sculpture of Mr. George Aarons on the façade of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation," Undated.
[130] Kampf, *Contemporary Synagogue Art*, 93.

Arnold H. Bergier (1914-): Menorah, Eternal Light, Sculptured Decoration around the Ark

Arnold H. Bergier designed the menorah, the Eternal Light, and the sculptured decoration around the Ark. In 1952, he also designed and executed two memorial pillars of Solomon for the congregation. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio and studied at the School of Industrial Arts in Trenton, New Jersey. He later apprenticed with French sculptor, Joseph Dube. He did many portrait busts of world famous personalities. His work was exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art and the National Academy of Design in New York City.[131] The sculptures Bergier designed for Baltimore Hebrew Congregation were featured in a 1954 article in the journal *Interiors* and were described as fully integrated into the interior of the sanctuary "as a permanent part of the design."[132]

Commissioned by Percival Goodman himself, the sculptures at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation were the first works of Jewish religious art completed by Bergier. All of the pieces completed for the synagogue (the Eternal Light, Menorah, and sculptured decoration around the Ark) were featured at the symposium on *Jewish Religious Art* on May 11, 1952 at the Jewish Museum in New York City. The seven-branch menorah is a 175-pound candelabra made of welded bronze and steel. It is situated on the alter wall of the sanctuary, to the side of the Ark. The menorah is comprised of 2,000 welding rods and pieces of steel. It is coated in bronze to give it a "patina of warm pink and bright yellow bronze."[133] The menorah took Bergier three months to finish and has "tubular branches divided into sections which look as if they were growing out of each other like plant shoots."[134]

In addition to the sculpture and other artwork in the sanctuary, Bergier also designed the Memorial alcove that includes the congregation's memorial book and lights. The alcove measures 7'2"x10'4" and includes the inscription, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." (from Job 1:21).[135]

William H. Halsey (1914-1999): Murals in Sanctuary Foyer

William Halsey designed and executed the murals in the sanctuary's foyer. He was born in Charleston, South Carolina and received lessons and advice from the Charleston Renaissance artists Elizabeth O'Neill Verner and Edward I. R. Jennings. He was trained at the University of South Carolina, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the University of New Mexico. Halsey was one of South Carolina's foremost modern artists. His work was exhibited throughout the country and was characterized as "unemphatic linear geometric constructions on top of sections of color." His major interest was in mural painting and he executed two murals for the

[131] Pamphlet published for "Jewish Religious Art" symposium, Baltimore Hebrew Congregation, May 11, 1952.
[132] *Interiors*, 113 (January 1954): 10.
[133] "Menorah Placed in New Temple," *Baltimore Sun*, April 15, 1952.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Avram Kampf, *Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965 (* New York: 1966), 173.

tabernacle of the Congregation Beth Elohim in Charleston. He taught at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the College of Charleston.[136]

Halsey accepted the commission for the murals in 1951. Paul Goodman, the architect's brother, was a well-known poet and intellectual who assembled the thematic material for the mural. Halsey, though, designed and painted the murals alone. The studies and plans for the murals were exhibited at the Jewish Museum in New York in a show entitled *Synagogue Art* prior to their installation at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.

The 9½'x60" mural embellishes the synagogue foyer at the entrance to the sanctuary; it is entitled *Burning Bush and the Promise of Peace.* It was one of the first mural paintings ever placed in a synagogue vestibule in America. The mural is located to the sides of and above the doors leading into the sanctuary. It is divided into three sections, and while each is independent in theme, all are combined to create a unified work of art based on passages from Exodus, Chapter 3.[137] The Jewish symbolism in the murals at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation was described in Thiry, Bennett, and Kamphoefner's *Churches and Temples:* "the left side illustrates the spirit of religion as represented by the story of Moses and the Burning Bush…over the door, are the tablets of the Ten Commandments…right side illustrates the promise of religion as represented by the Tree of Life, maternity and husbandry."[138] The work is also highlighted in Kampf's *Contemporary Synagogue Art.* Here, the symbolism is further explored. The left section (Moses and the Burning Bush) represents the confrontation of God and man and the birth of Judaism's covenant. The portion over the sanctuary doors illustrates the stream of the Jewish people delivered from bondage in Egypt. The design on the right expresses the fulfillment of the Messianic hopes of a life of peace, work, harvest, and harmony between men—the fulfillment of the covenant.[139]

The mural depicts "flat, simplified figures, assembled upon a predominantly blue and green framework of linear, geometrical designs."[140] The completion of the murals was also notable as an example of Halsey's participation in the established Abstract Expressionist movement. Through this project, Halsey joined a number of other artists who were introducing modern art into contemporary synagogues and other Jewish community buildings.[141] "During the 1950s and 1960s, approximately one thousand new synagogues were consecrated in the United States, a significant number of which directly commissioned work by Abstract Expressionist artists. The synagogue projects provided the opportunity for many abstract artists to work on large scale and important commissions."[142]

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[136] *The Charleston Renaissance Gallery*, <http://www.fineartssouth.com/artist/index.cfm?ItemID=2317996>
[137] Avram Kampf, *Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965* (New York: 1966), 130-130.
[138] Paul Thiry, Richard M. Bennett and Henry L. Kamphoefner, *Churches & Temples* (New York: 1953), 40J.
[139] Avram Kampf, *Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965* (New York: 1966), 130-133.
[140] "Corrie McCallum – William Halsey Foundation," available on-line at: http://www.carolinaarts.com/halseythesischapter2.html.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.

Nissan Engel (1931-): Stained Glass Windows

Nissan Engel designed the stained glass windows at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. He was born in Israel and lived for periods of time in Paris and New York City. He studied at the Beaux-Arts Bezalel in Jerusalem and received a degree in theater design from the Centre dramatique de l'Est in Strasbourg, France. He moved to Paris in the mid-1950s and often exhibited beginning in 1960 at the Galerie Weil. Engel moved to the United States in 1965 and settled in New York City.[143] His work often alluded to the themes of music and Jewish mysticism. Other work completed by Engel includes stained glass windows for a temple in Lawrence, Louisiana and sculpture and stained-glass commissions in New York and New Jersey. He has exhibited at the Reyn Gallery in New York, the Riebenfield Gallery in Jaffa, Israel, the Goldman Gallery in Haifa, Israel, the Lowenadler Gallery in Stockholm, the International Art Fair in Basel, Switzerland, The Vinciana Gallery in Milan, the 1981 Art Expo in New York, the Lincoln Center in New York, and the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. In addition, Engel participated in six salons: Grand Prix International de Peinture in Cannes, France (1958), Jeune peinture in Paris (1960-1965), Grands et jeunes d'aujourd'hui in France (1960-1965), des Beaux-Arts in Paris (1960-1965), Comparaisons in Paris (1980), and de Montrouge in France (1980-1983).[144]

The sixteen stained glass windows designed by Engel at Baltimore Hebrew Congregation encircle the chapel space. This was only the second project in stained glass completed by the artist. The congregation became familiar with Engel's work through his paintings that were exhibited in the synagogue's Hoffberger gallery in 1967. The windows include human figures that symbolize the important stages in the development of the Jewish people from the world's creation to the establishment of the State of Israel. The figures include, among others, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Elijah, Samuel, King David, Isaiah, Amos, and Ruth. The windows are 16' tall and 2' wide and have lead separators that are essential to the design. Engel used the lead "as he might use a heavy pencil to draw the figures on paper."[145]

[143] "Nissan Engel," available on-line at: http://www.engel-nissan.com/biography.html.
[144] Ibid.
[145] Weldon Wallace, "Windows Portray Jewish History," *Baltimore Sun*, December 9, 1968.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 5.259

UTM References
(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1				3			
2				4			

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification
(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Stephanie R. Ryberg, Dr. Mary Corbin Sies, Dr. Isabelle Gournay, & Jen Feldman

Organization University of Maryland, School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation date 1-31-05

street & number School of Architecture telephone 301-405-6284

city or town College Park state Maryland zip code 20742

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items
(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name *Electors of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation*

street & number 7401 Park Heights Avenue telephone 410-764-1587

city or town Baltimore state Maryland zip code 21208-5490

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary for the property is the identical to that as defined on the tax map and parcel.

Boundary Justification:

This boundary defines the historical property as well as the present day site of the congregation.

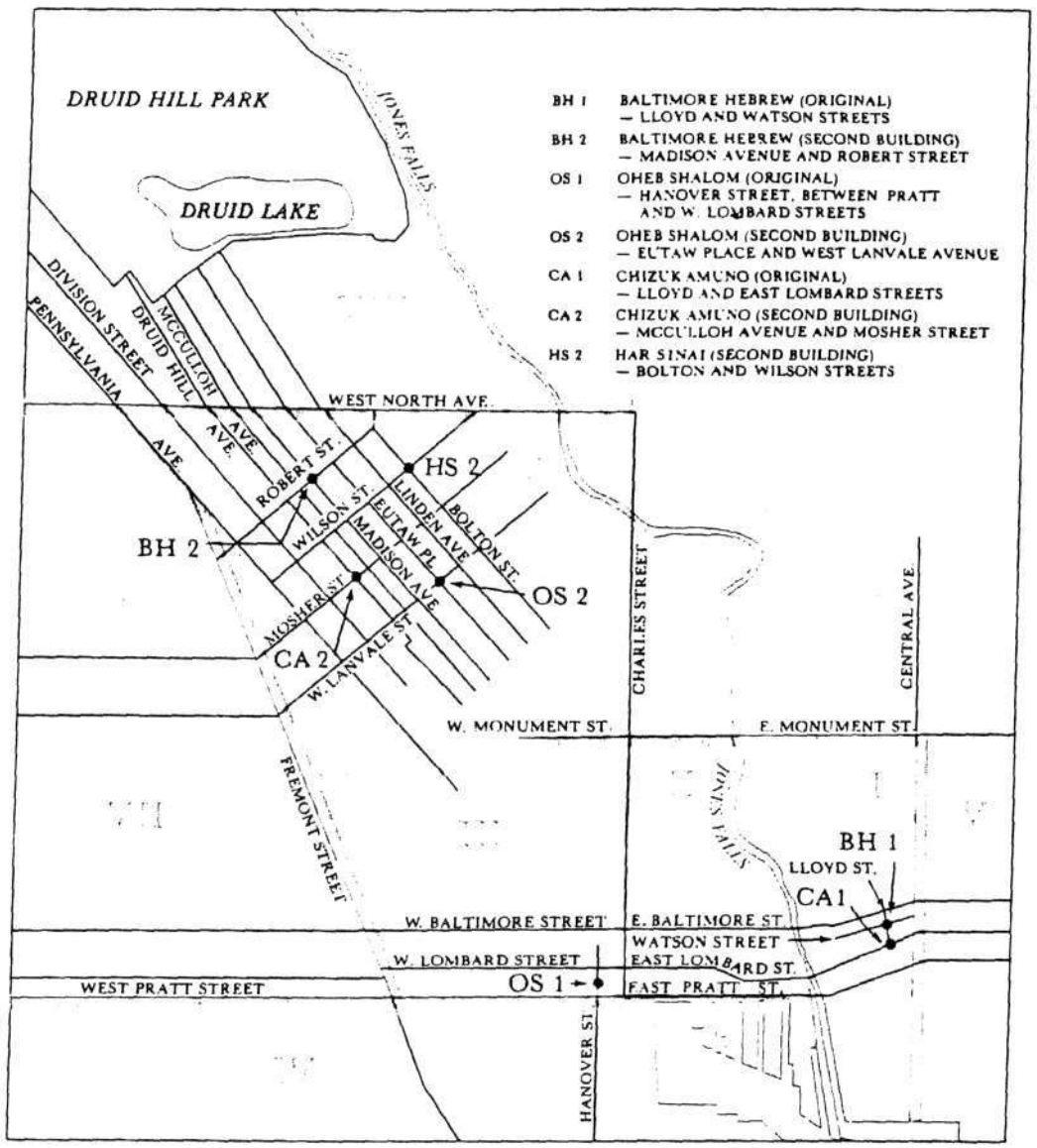

Plate 1
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Map showing the location of the first two synagogues of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation. Note their proximity to other synagogues and the early shift from East Baltimore to the northwest portion of the city.
Source: Rozenblit, Marsha L. "Choosing a Synagogue: The Social Composition of Two German Congregations in Nineteenth-Century Baltimore," in Jack Wertheimer, ed. *The American Synagogue*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, 331.

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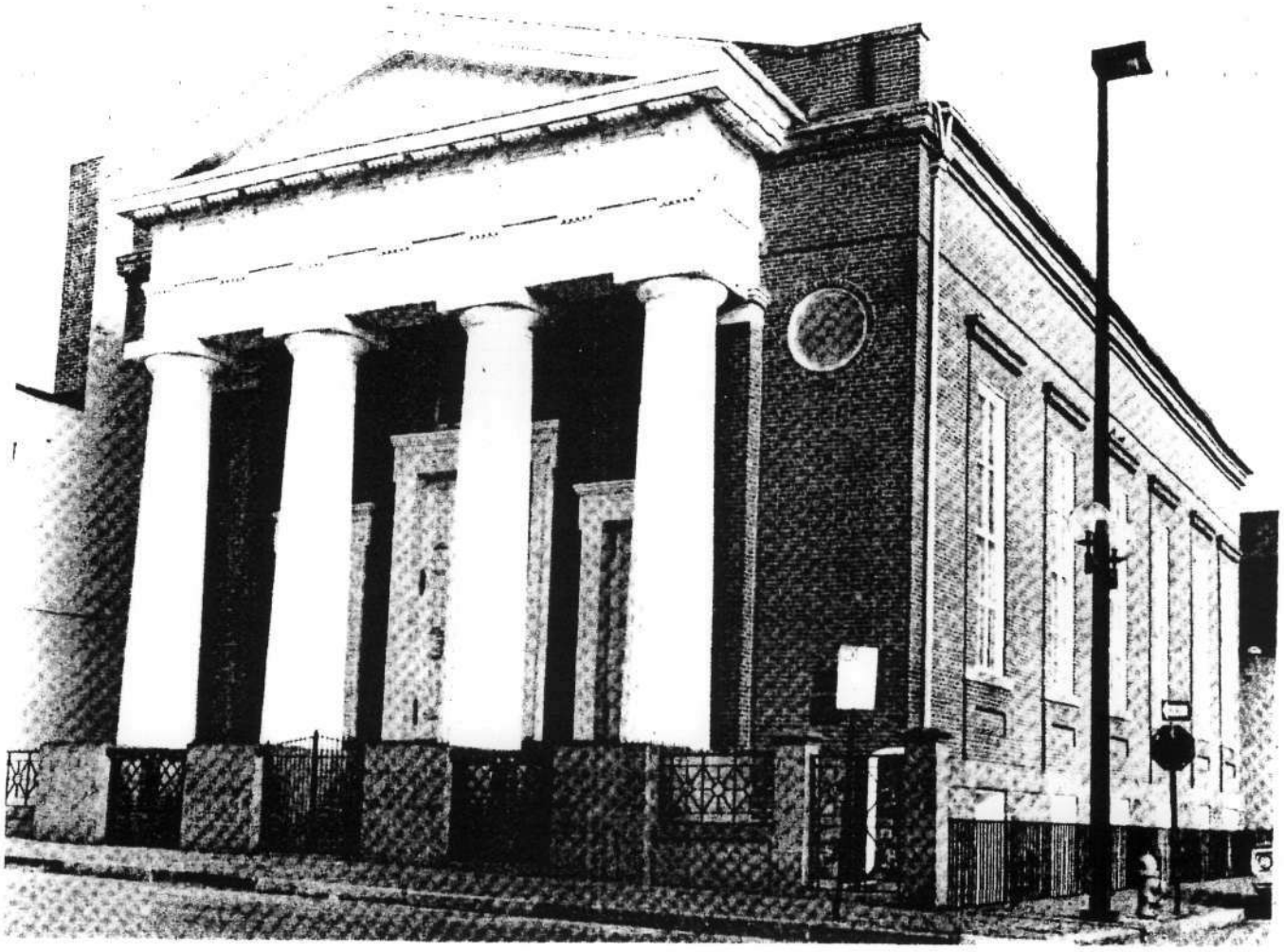

Plate 2
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
The Lloyd Street Synagogue. Constructed in 1845, it was the first synagogue building in Baltimore. This building incorporated an image of the Star of David in a stained-glass window above the Ark. This was the first use of the Star of David in exterior decoration in any synagogue in the United States.
Source: Israelowitz, Oscar. *Synagogues of the United States: A Photographic and Architectural Survey*. New York: Israelowitz Publishing, 1992, 23.

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Plate 3
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
A study drawing by Percival Goodman for the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation project, 1948.
Source: Elman, Kimberly J. and Angela Giral, eds. *Percival Goodman: architect – planner – teacher – painter*. New York: The Trustees of Columbia University, 2000, 45.
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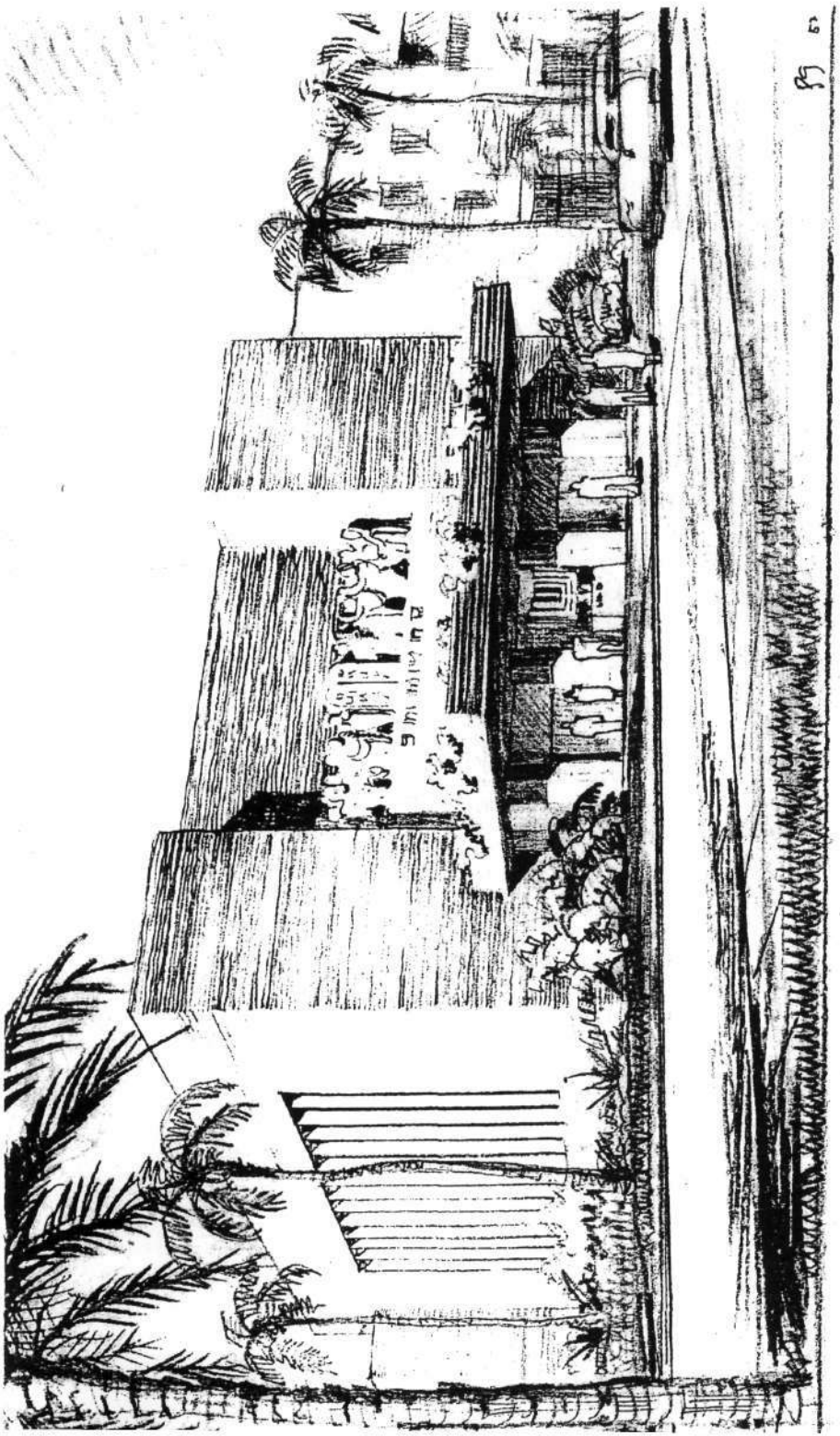

Synagogue Baltimore Study

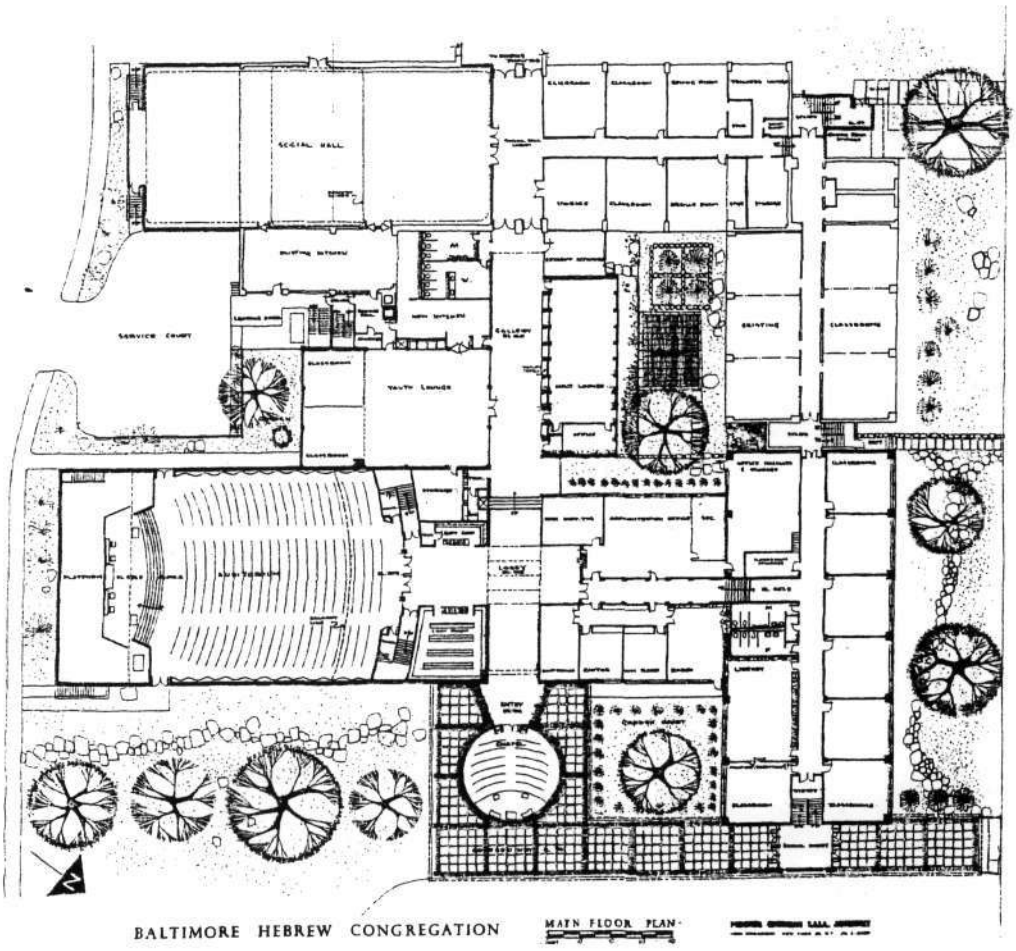

Plate 4
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Initial floor plan as designed by Percival Goodman.
Source: Elman, Kimberly J. and Angela Giral, eds. *Percival Goodman: architect – planner – teacher – painter.* New York: The Trustees of Columbia University, 2000, 73.

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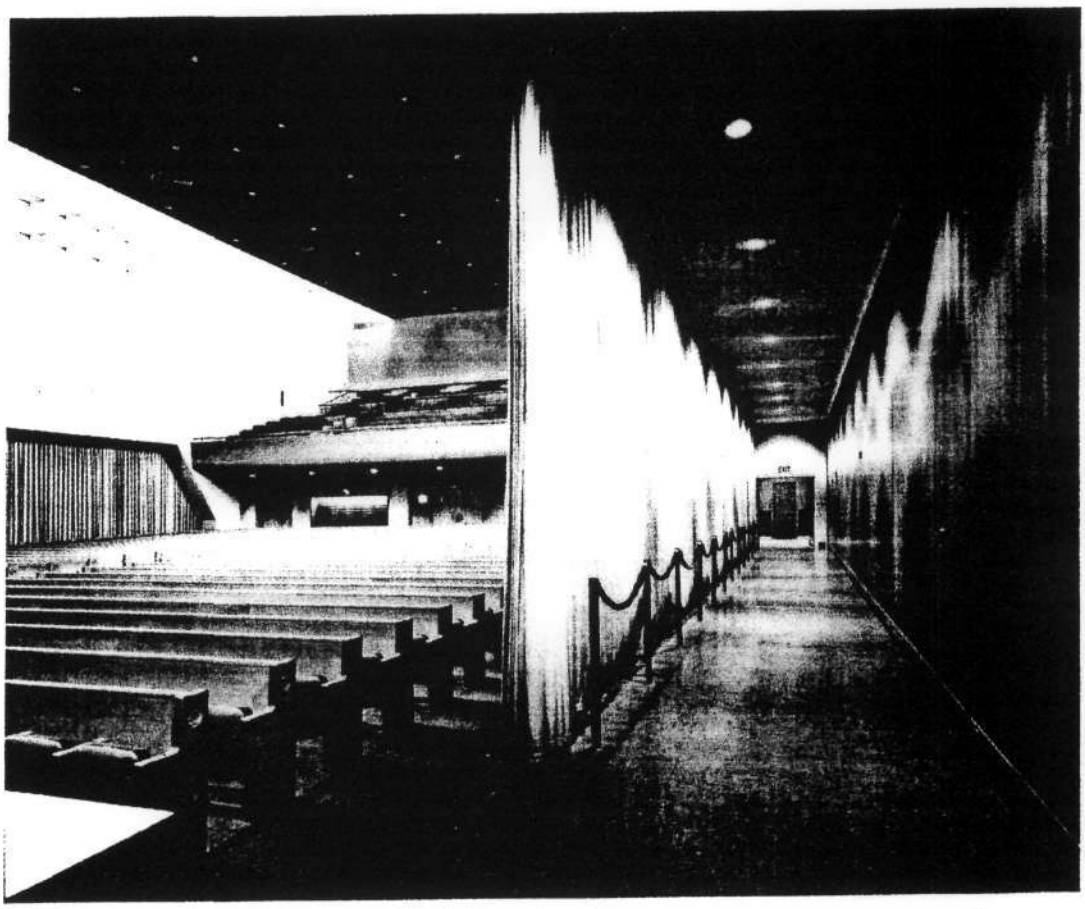

Plate 5
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
View toward the rear of the sanctuary from the side aisle.
Source: Elman, Kimberly J. and Angela Giral, eds. *Percival Goodman: architect – planner – teacher – painter.* New York: The Trustees of Columbia University, 2000, 73.

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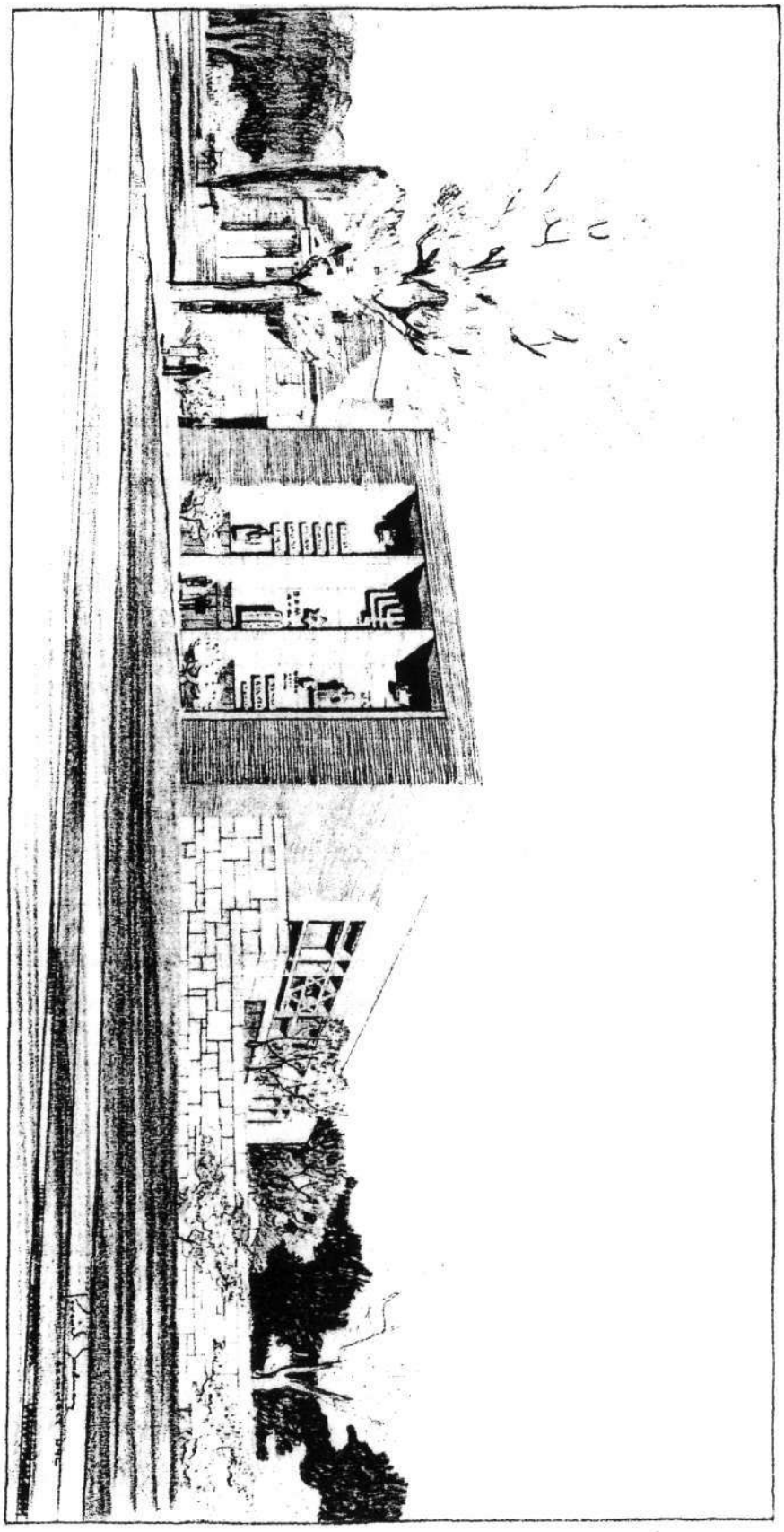

Plate 6
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Rendering of exterior of the synagogue complex.
Source: Elman, Kimberly J. and Angela Giral, eds. *Percival Goodman: architect – planner – teacher – painter*. New York: The Trustees of Columbia University, 2000, 74.

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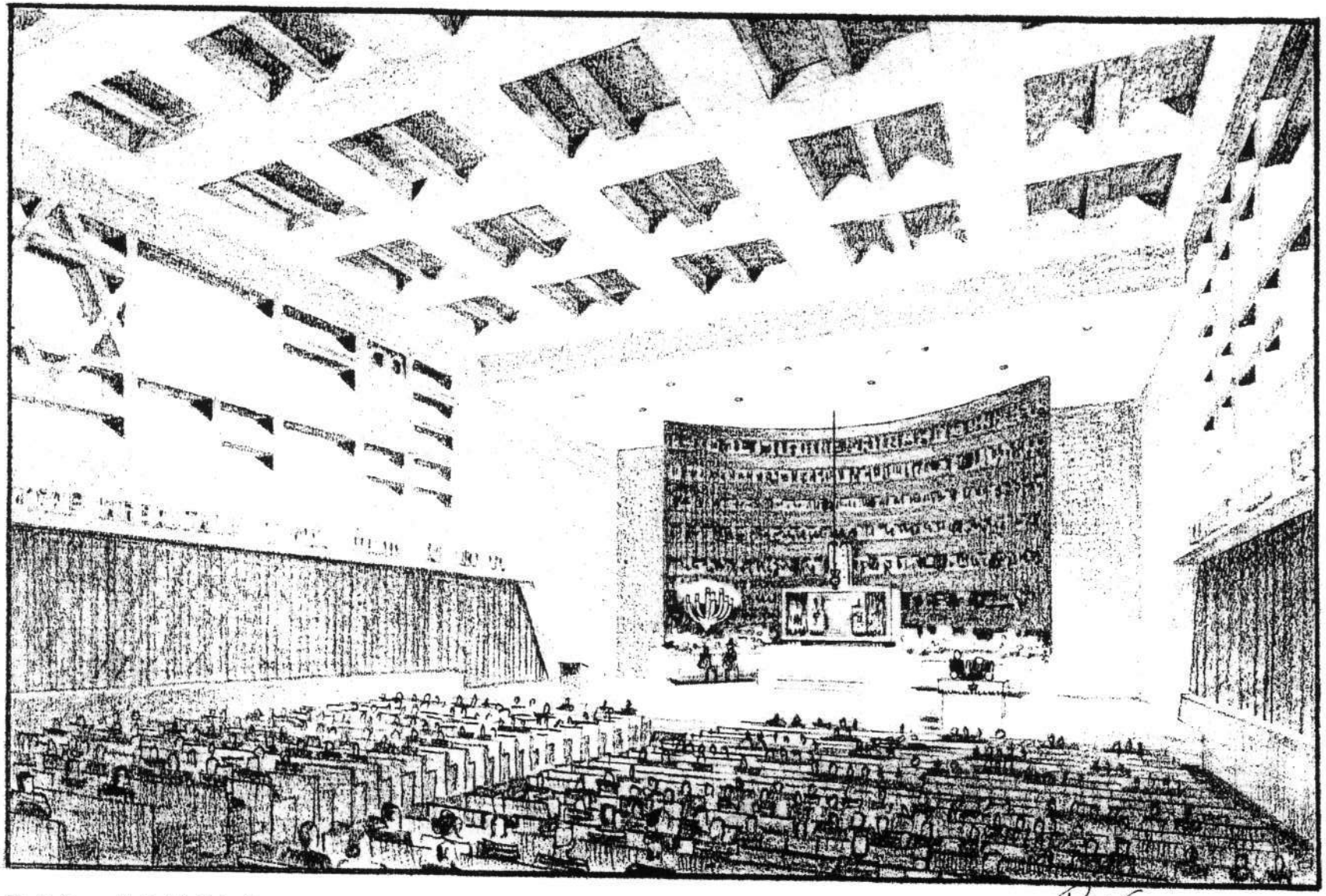

THE TEMPLE

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Plate 7
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Rendering of the sanctuary.
Source: Elman, Kimberly J. and Angela Giral, eds. *Percival Goodman: architect – planner – teacher – painter*. New York: The Trustees of Columbia University, 2000, 75.

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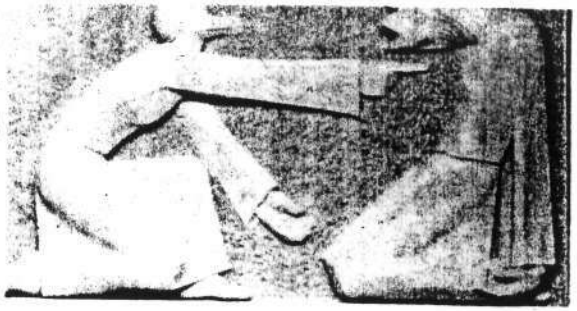
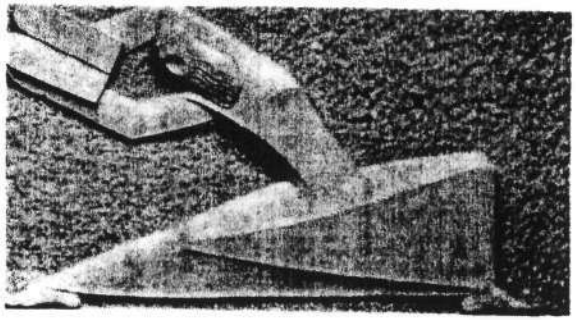
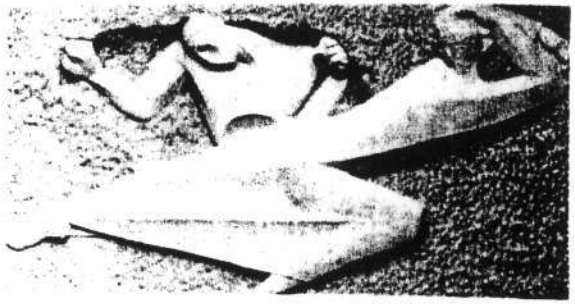


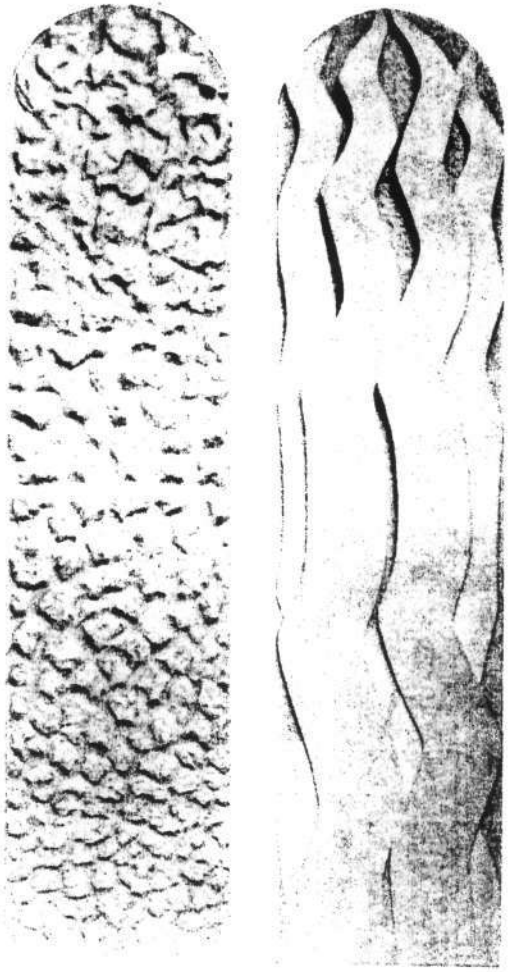
THE PROPHET NATHAN
AND KING DAVID



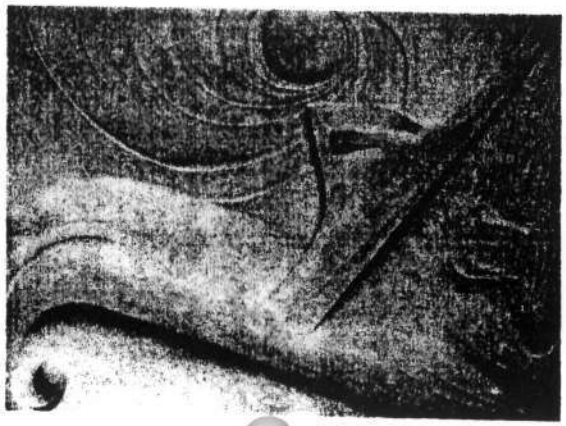
REVELATION
AT SINAI



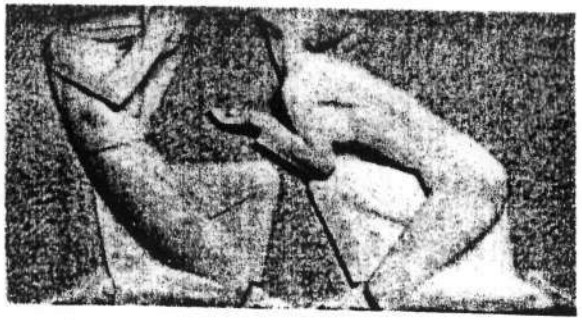
EXODUS



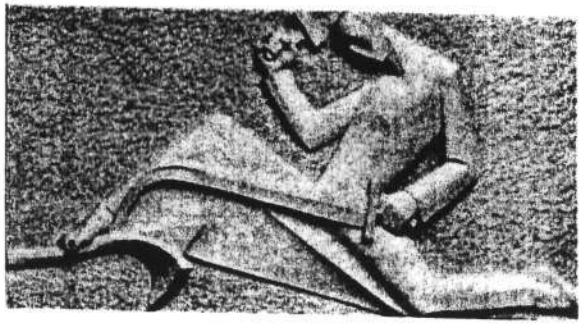
THE TABLETS OF THE LAW



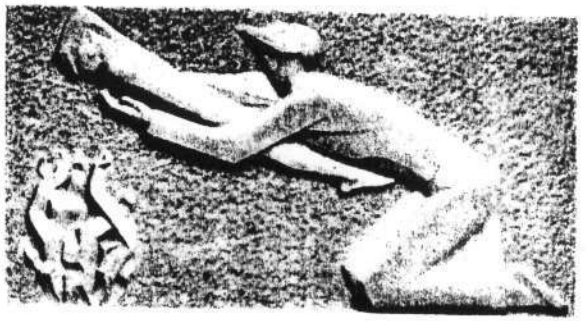
CR ON



RUTH AND
NAOMI



SWORDS
INTO PLOUGHSHARES



THE SACRIFICE
OF ISAAC

Plate 8
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Detail of the façade sculptures, executed by George Aarons.
Source: "The Sculptures on the façade of the Baltimore Hebrew Congregation," pamphlet published by Baltimore Hebrew Congregation.

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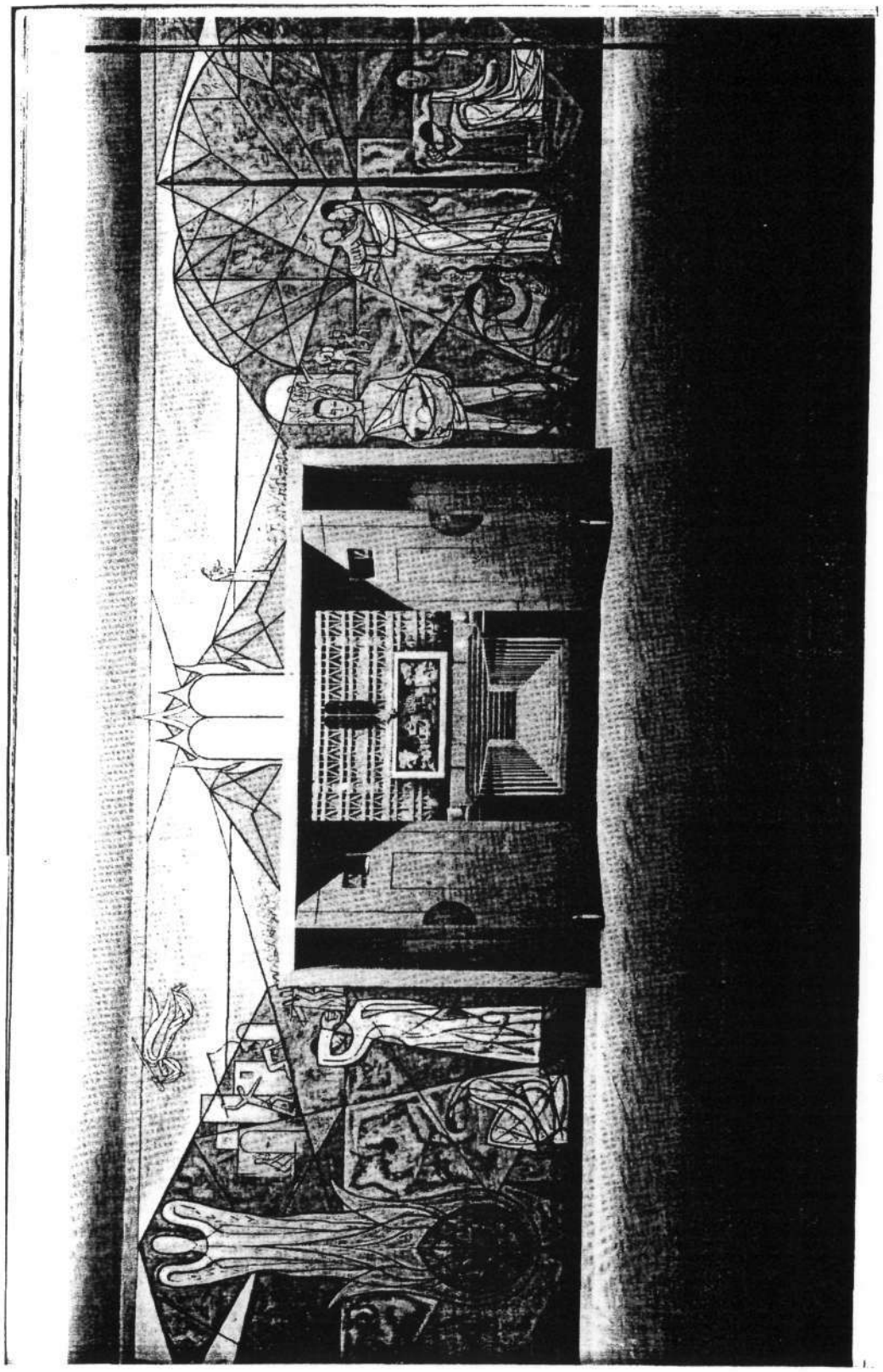

Plate 9
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
The Burning Bush and the Promise of Peace, 9½'x60' mural,
executed in 1951 by William Halsey.
Source: Kampf, Avram. *Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1966, 131.

B-1383

Plate 10
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Detail of "Moses before the Burning Bush" from *The Burning Bush and the Promise of Peace* by William Halsey.
Source: Kampf, Avram. *Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1966, 133.

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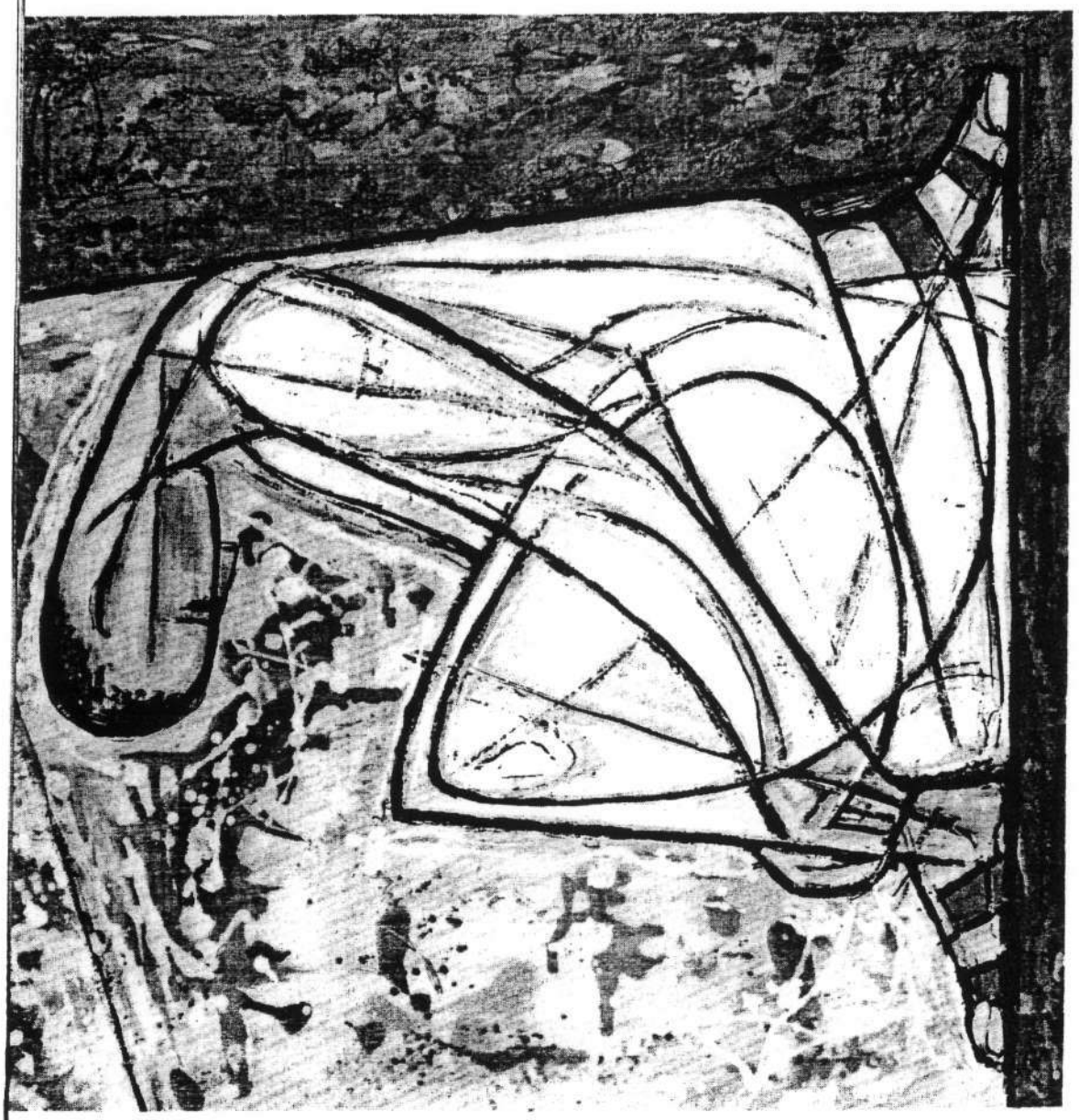

Plate 11
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Detail of "the Promise of Peace" from *The Burning Bush and the Promise of Peace* by William Halsey.
Source: Kampf, Avram. *Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965*. New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1966, 133.

12

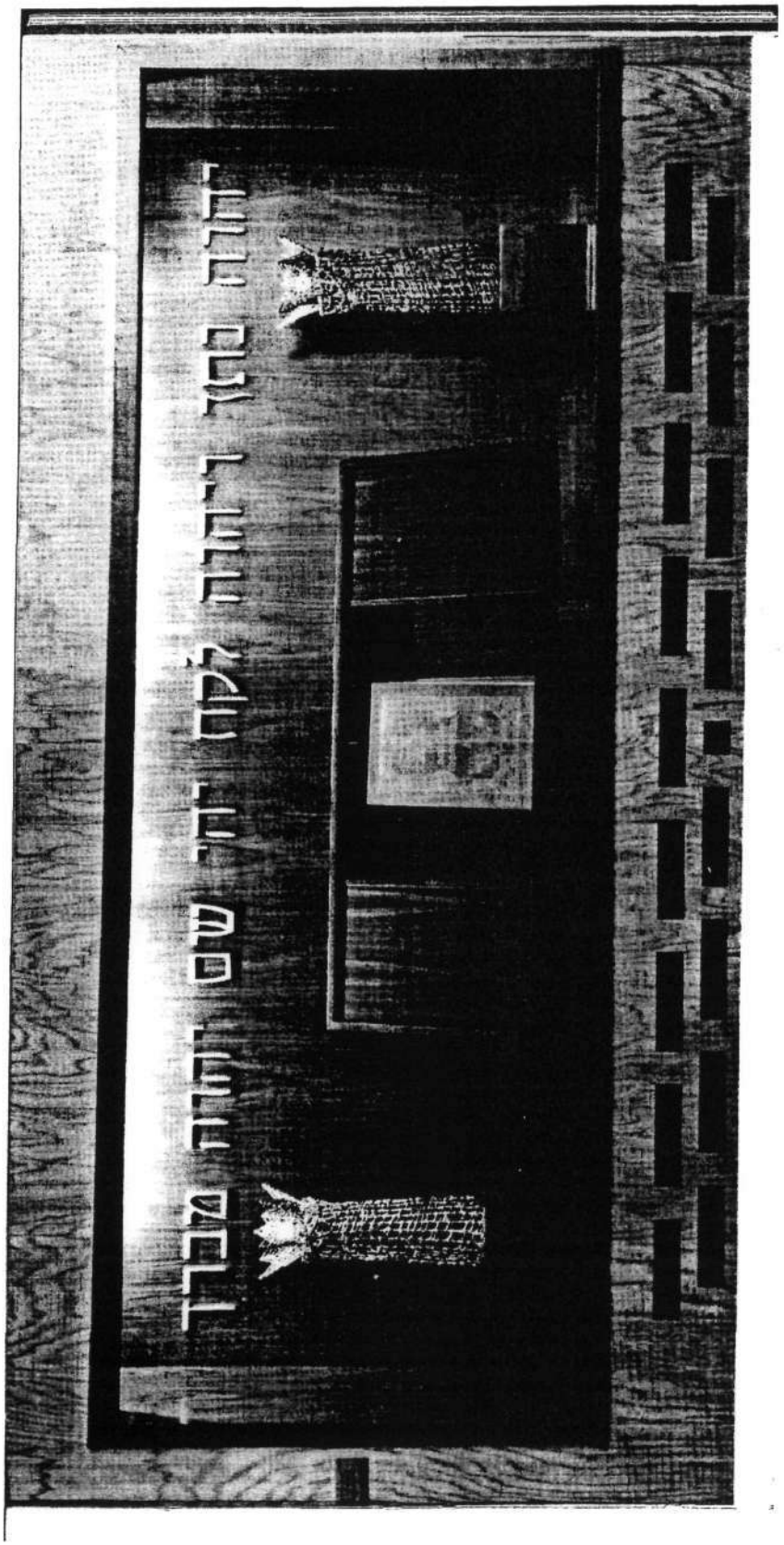

Plate 12
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Memorial Alcove, designed by Arnold Bergier.
Source: Kampf, Avram. *Contemporary Synagogue Art: Developments in the United States, 1945-1965.* New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1966, 173.

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13

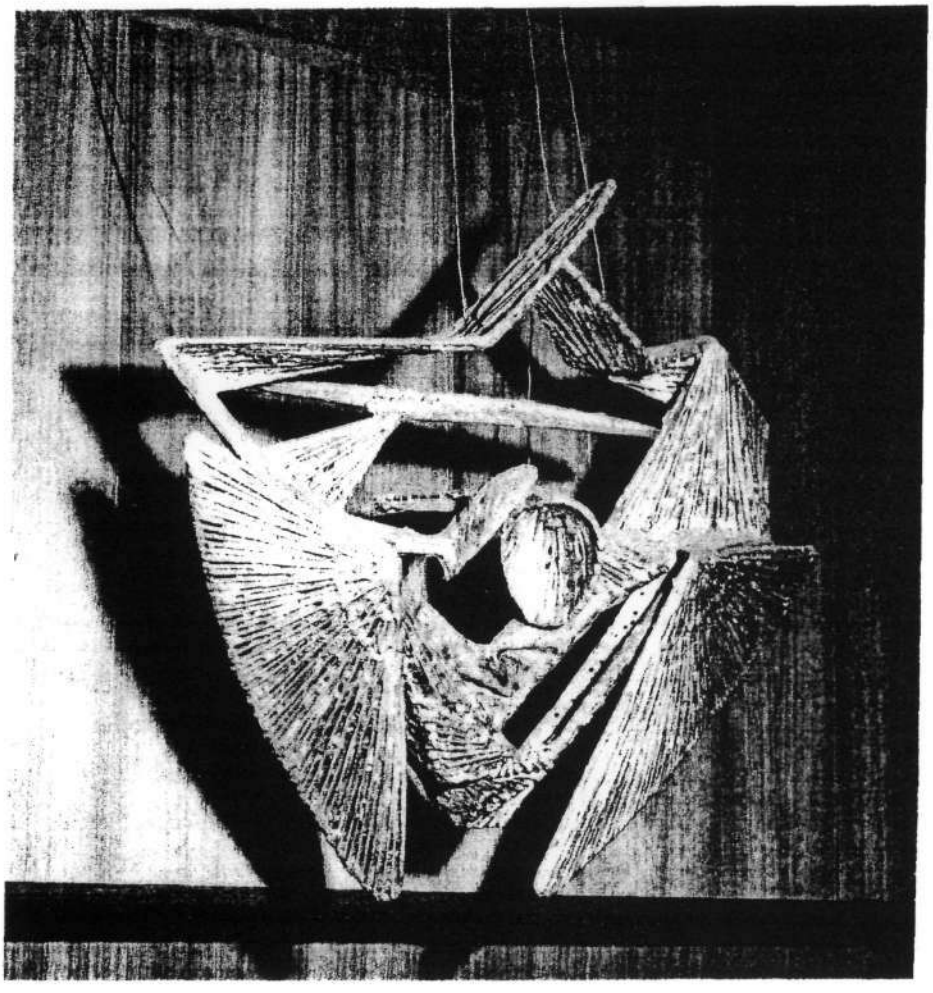

Plate 13
Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
Metal sculpture by Arnold Bergier.
Source: Elman, Kimberly J. and Angela Giral, eds. *Percival Goodman: architect – planner – teacher – painter.* New York: The Trustees of Columbia University, 2000, 76.

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Fig. 170 Rothschild Residence, Baltimore, 1948–50: exterior view (cat. 21c)

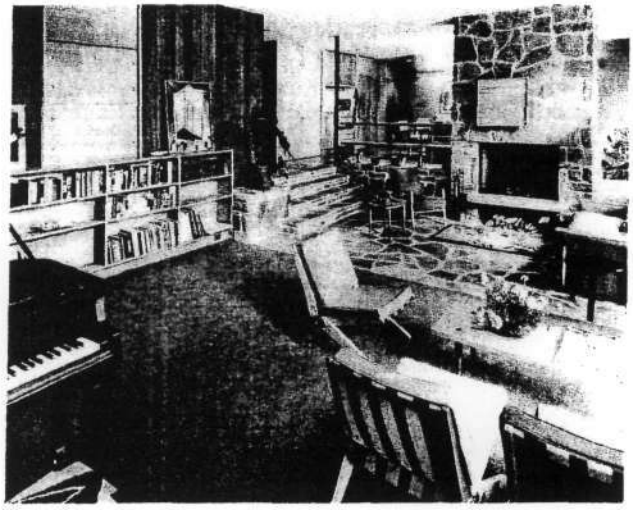

Fig. 171 Rothschild Residence, Baltimore, 1948–50: interior view (cat. 21b)

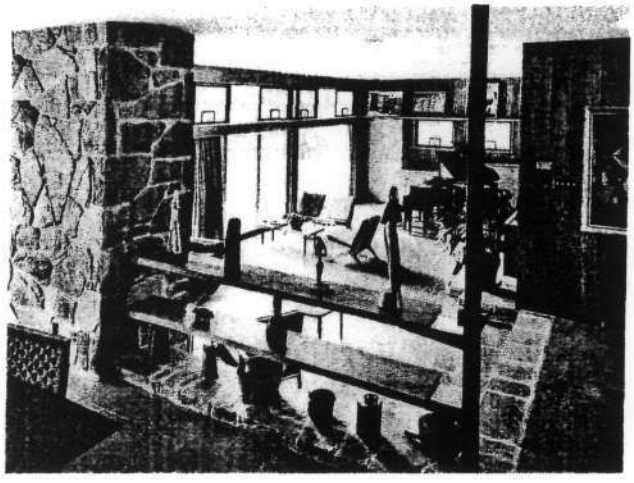

Fig. 172 Rothschild Residence, Baltimore, 1948–50: interior view (cat. 21a)

Plate 14

Images of the Rothschild residence designed by Percival Goodman from 1948-1950.
Source: Elman, Kimberly J. and Angela Giral, eds. *Percival Goodman: architect – planner – teacher – painter*. New York: The Trustees of Columbia University, 2000, 175.

B-1383

15

Plate 15

Percival Goodman's Smithsonian Gallery of Art Competition drawings, 1939 (elevation and plan).
Source: Elman, Kimberly J. and Angela Giral, eds. *Percival Goodman: architect – planner – teacher – painter*. New York: The Trustees of Columbia University, 2000, 7.

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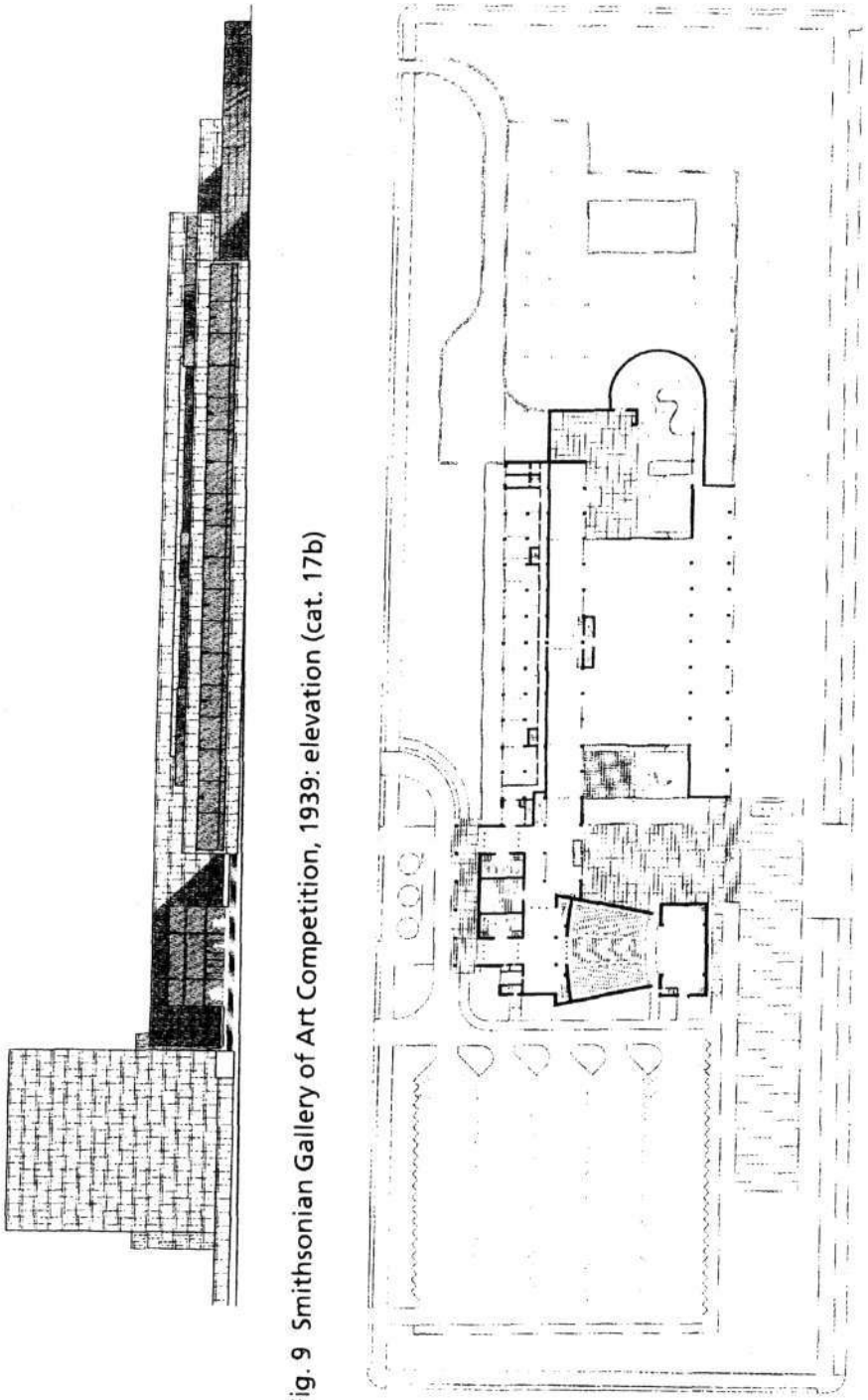


Fig. 9 Smithsonian Gallery of Art Competition, 1939: elevation (cat. 17b)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

BALTIMORE HEBREW CONGREGATION
USGS: BALTIMORE WEST, MD
SW/4 BALTIMORE 15' QUADRANGLE
N3915-W7637.5/7.5 1953
PHOTOREVISED 1966 AND 1974
SCALE 1:24000

B-1383


TIMORE
EBREW
REGATION

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
7401 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD

BA-1383

Baltimore City, MD

Jen Feldman
March 2003

Maryland Historic Trust

View of the formal entrance to the synagogue, facing Park Heights Avenue

#1


BALTIMORE
HEBREW
CONGREGATION

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
7401 Park Heights Ave.
Baltimore, MD
Baltimore City, MD

BA 1383

Jen Feldman
March 2003

Maryland Historic Trust

Main facade of the synogogue facing Park Heights Avenue

#2

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
7401 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD

BA-1383

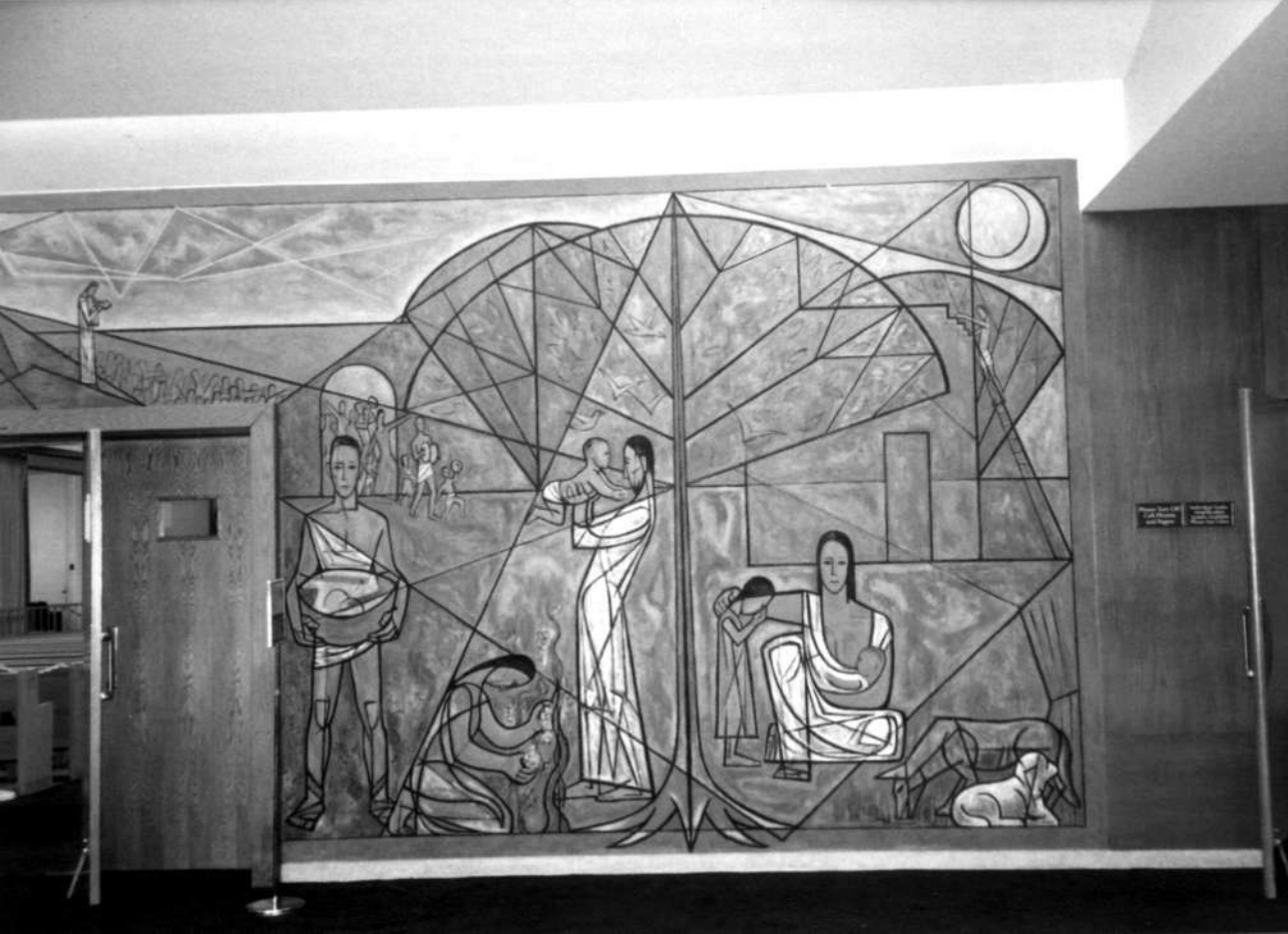
Baltimore City, MD

Jen Feldman
March 2003

Maryland Historic Trust

Side facade of the sanctuary.

#3



Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
7401 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD
Baltimore City, MD

BA-1383

Jen Feldman
March 2003

Maryland Historic Trust

view of the mural Burning Bush and the Promise of Peace designed by William H. Hastey

#4

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
7401 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD
Baltimore City, MD

BA-1383

Jen Feldman
March 2003

Maryland Historic Trust

View of the Sanctuary of the synagogue complex, looking towards the bema from the rear

#5

Baltimore Hebrew congregation
7401 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD

Baltimore City, MD

BA-1383

Jen Feldman
march 2003

Maryland Historic Trust

View of the sanctuary of the synagogue complex, looking from the bema to the rear balcony

#6


לא תנאף
לא תגנב
לא תענה
לא תחמד

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
7401 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD

BA-1383

Baltimore City, MD

Jen Feldman
March 2003

Maryland Historic Trust

View of the back wall of the bema with a representation of the Ten commandments

#7

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
7401 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD
Baltimore City, MD

BA-1383

Jen Feldman
March 2003

Maryland Historic Trust

View of the bema in the sanctuary with the Menorah designed by Arnold Bergier

#8


קדש לחלה

Baltimore Hebrew Congregation
7401 Park Heights Avenue
Baltimore, MD
Baltimore City, MD

BA-1383

Jen Feldman
March 2003

Maryland Historic Trust

View of the back wall of the bema in the sanctuary with four-paneled tapestry designed by Amalie Rothschild

#9